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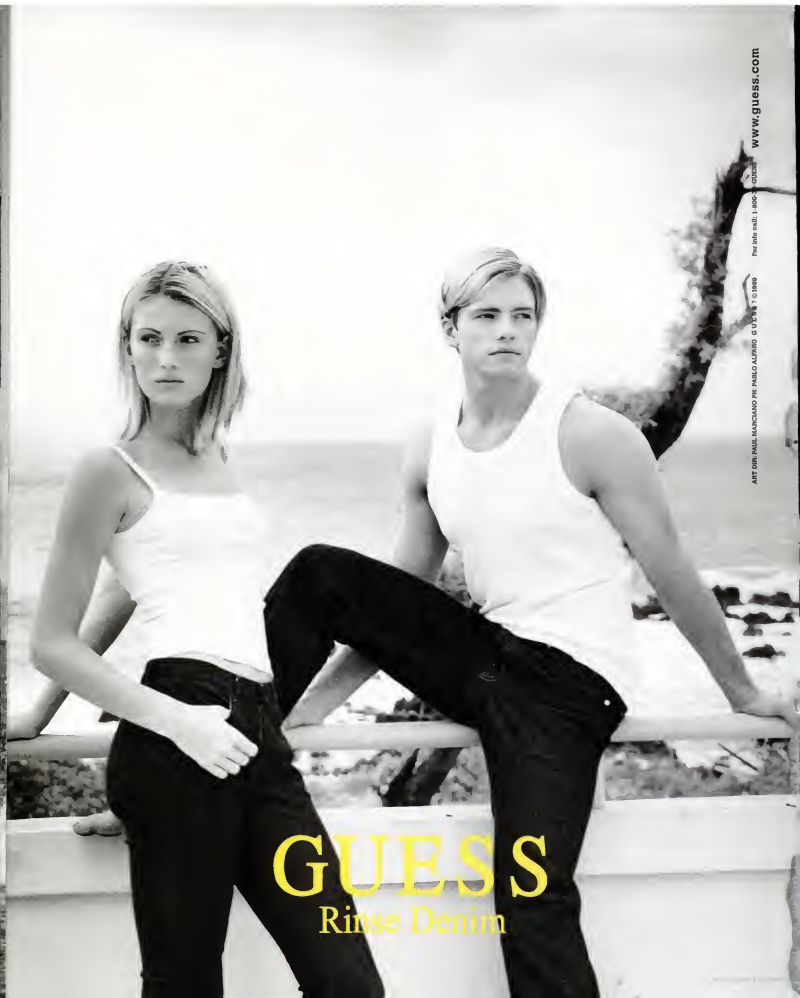
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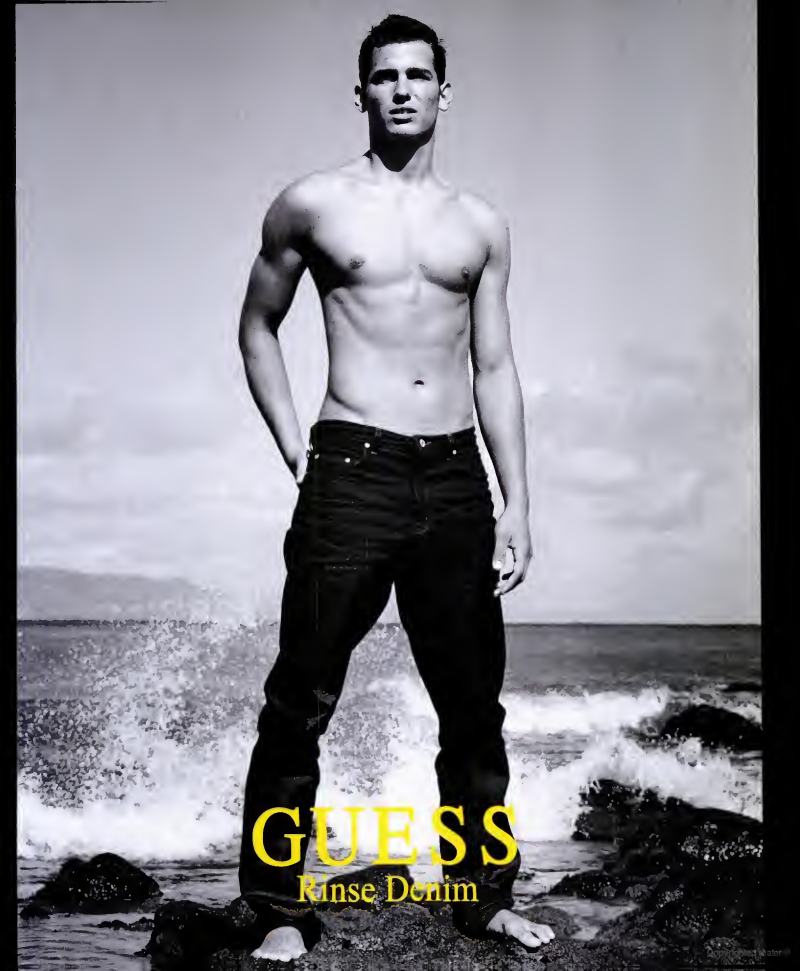
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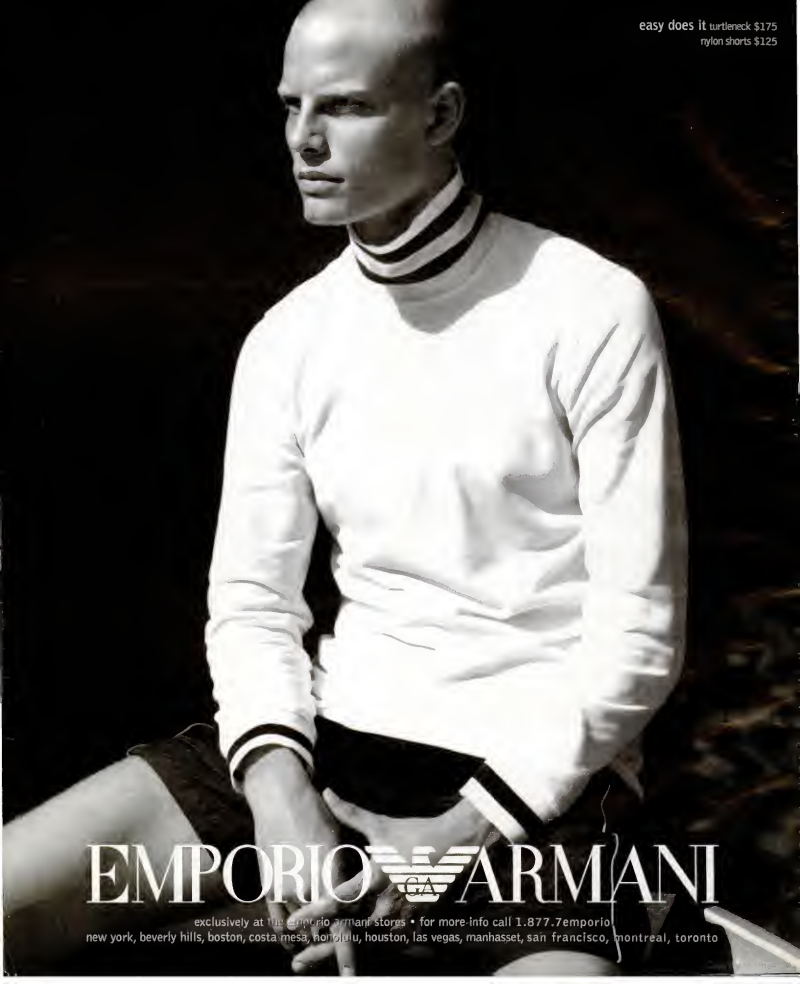


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on her: button-down shirt \$165, cropped pants \$145



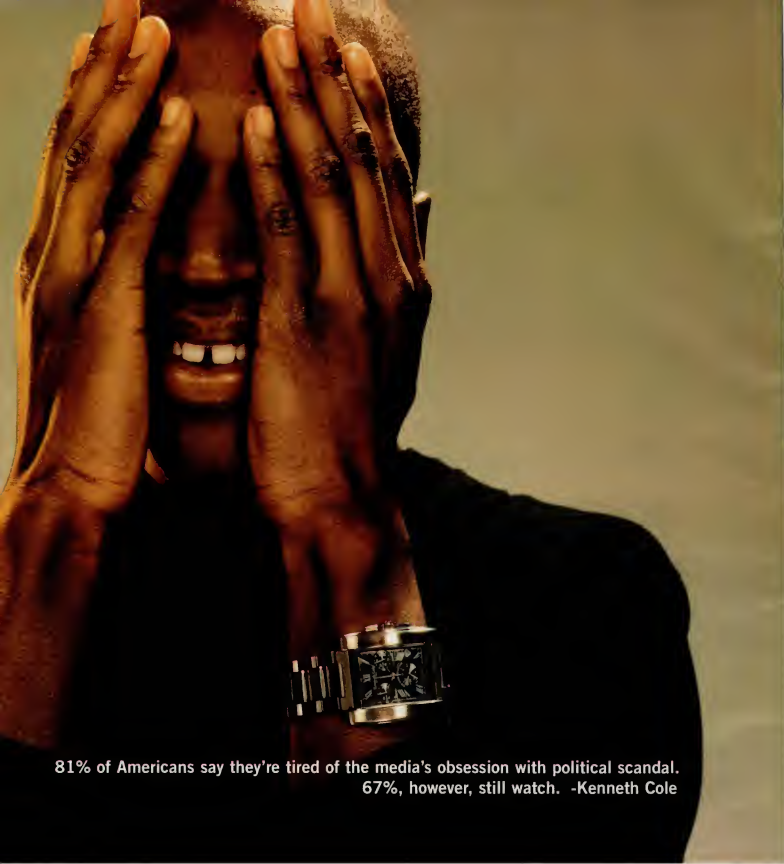
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nice balance: button collar shirt \$155
flat front pants with elasticized ankle \$195



button up cobra collar shirt/jacket \$125



81% of Americans say they're tired of the media's obsession with political scandal.
67%, however, still watch. -Kenneth Cole

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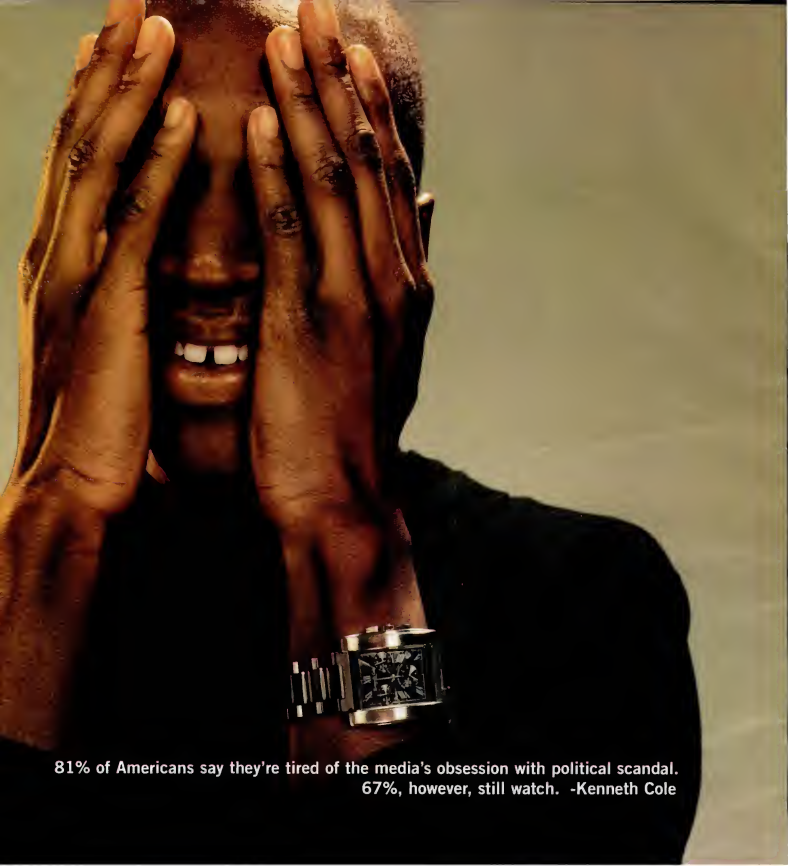
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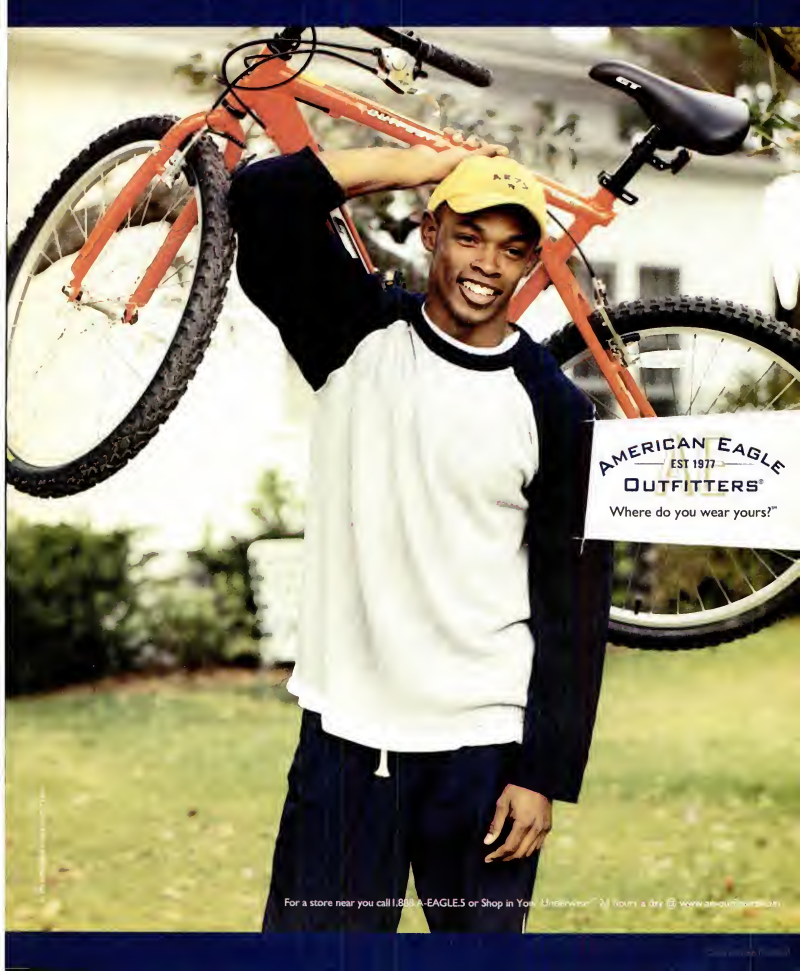
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FEATURES

MARCH 1999 • VOLUME 7, NUMBER 2

THE FASHION ISSUE

74 WE STILL LOVE THIS GAME!

Master P runs point with the Fort Wayne Fury, and Elliott Wilson provides color commentary.

Photographs by Kurt Gerber

Meanwhile, *Chairman Mao* discovers it ain't Silkk the Shocker's fault if his game is music and film.

Photographs by Piotr Sikora.

PLUS: Hoop dreamers weigh in on the NBA lockout.

84 VIBESTYLE: CONCRETE JUNGLE

Safari wear for wildin' in the 'hood.

Photographs by Juan Phillip Reyes

Styling by Kadi Agüeros

92 DREADED FUTURE

Stock market crashes, computer bugs, cash-less society, extinction-level events—Busta Rhymes has a lot of science to drop before the millennium disaster strikes.

By S.H. Fernando Jr.

Photographs by Piotr Sikora

ABOVE: Juvenile of Cash Money photographed exclusively for *VIBE* by Piotr Sikora. Master P of Cash Money; baseball hat by 50/50

ON THE COVER: MASTER P & SILKK THE SHOCKER photographed exclusively for *VIBE* by Piotr Sikora; styling by Kadi Agüeros; grooming by Oliver Elting for Buddy & Piro; red-white-and-blue camouflage leather jacket and shirt worn by NO LIMIT; sweater by Nike; white and gold team jersey Fort Wayne Fury; black and white t-shirt by Shady Records

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90 VIBEFASHION: DANGEROUS LIAISONS

Don't wanna be a playette no more. *Photographs by Marc Baptiste. Styling by Emil Wilbekin*

106 MAMMA SAID KNOCK YOU OUT

Boxer Patricia Alciwar speaks with her fists. *By Elena Cabral. Photograph by Eve M. Fowler*

113 THE SYSTEM: DEAD IN THE HOLE

Inmate Calvin Moore found out that solitary confinement can break a man. *By Randi Glatzer. Photographs by Elizabeth DeRamus*

120 VIBESTYLE: ALL THE WAY LIVE

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124 RAGS TO RICHES

Four brothers from Hollis, Queens create a clothing empire that's for us and by us. *By Michel Marriott. Photographs by Marc Baptiste*

130 FREE CHEESE DAYS

Queensbridge prodigy Nas has a dichotomy that often collides at the crossroads.

By Sacha Jenkins

Photographs by Mary Ellen Mark

139 THE STYLIST

VIBE staffers deliver the verdict on the new DKNY lines. *By Emil Wilbekin. Photographs by Piotr Sikora*

144 GEAR: Velcro.

146 VIBEFACE: Tatyana Ali.

Photograph by Steve Hiett. Styling by Emil Wilbekin



ABOVE: Filmmode Squad photographed exclusively for VIBE by Piotr Sikora; styling by Jill Topol for Celestine, N.Y. group wrap by Shonette for hair by Patricia Williams. Clockwise starting with Busta Rhymes, front and center: Olive-striped wool jacket by J.A. Paul Gaultier; gray wool suit by Shanghai Tang; Mongolian fur collar by Jessica Weiner, N.Y.C.; Rash Diggah: Black Asian silk dress with mustard amberbrocade by David Laundy; Tatyana Ali: Black leather jacket and velvet head wrap by Shanghai Tang; Nas: Black leather jacket by Silver Aest; Remy: Black leather jacket by Shanghai Tang; Bobby Brown: Cream karate jacket by Maharishi; hat by 555 SOUL; black parka by ENO; Baby Shm: Black shear shirt by Moschino Cheap & Chic; velvet scarf by Shanghai Tang; hat by JOD YOUNG, songstress by Ray-Ban

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160 **PHOTO** Billie Note Records.

By Suzanne M. F. Johnson

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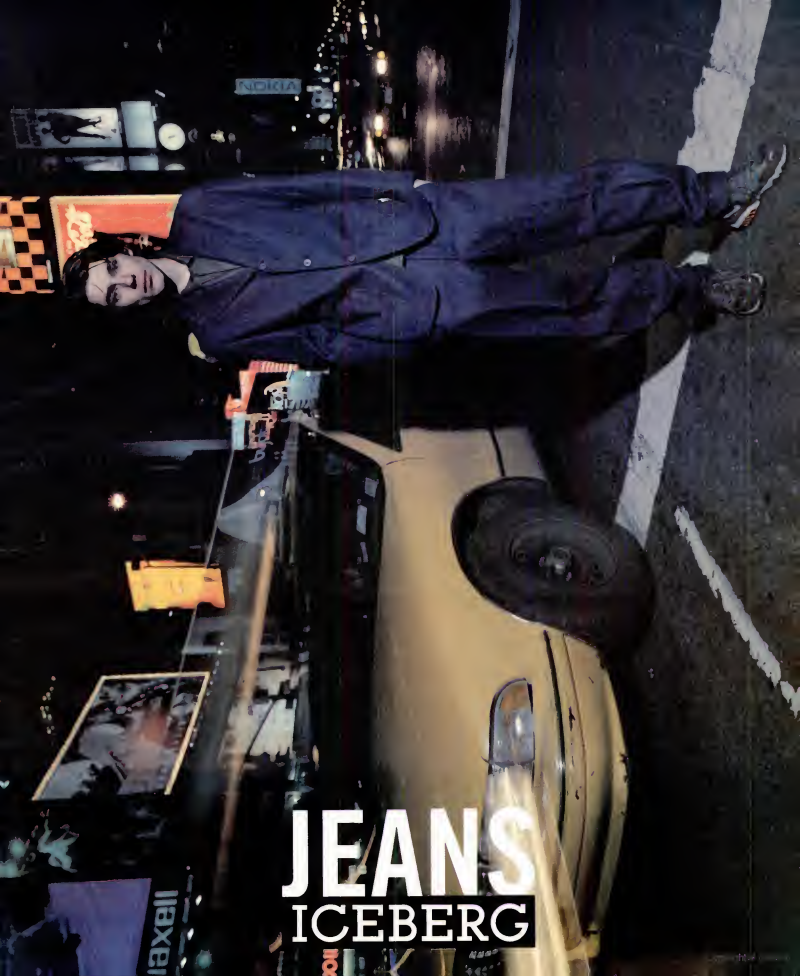
By Suzanne M. F. Johnson

By Suzanne M. F. Johnson

By Suzanne M. F. Johnson

By Suzanne M. F. Johnson

ABOVE: Cee Summer photographed by Phil Knecht styling by Kelle Kuehnert hair and makeup by Liz and Martin Gayle

A man with dark hair and a beard, wearing a dark jacket and pants, stands next to a yellow car at night. The background is a city street with various signs and lights. The car is a classic model, possibly a Volkswagen Beetle, and is parked on a street with white lane markings. The man is looking towards the camera.

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Contributors

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Photographers

Raven Afanador, Lorenzo Agius, Guy Aroch, Butch Belair, Walter Chin, Byron Claiborne, Geoffrey de Boissement, Jeff Dumas, Exam, Larry Fink, Sarah A. Friedman, Jayson Keeling, Phil Kasser, Didi Len, Dana Lisenberg, Amalio Anya-Larica, Taziano Magni, Jonathan Mannion, Robert Maxwell, Melodie McDaniel, Erin Patrice O'Brien, Katharina Orme, Jeff Riedel, Nina Schultz, Taryn Simon, Tajana, Mpozi Mahale Tolibet, Tony Ward, Andrew Williams, Everard Williams Jr., Dan Winters, Christian Witkin

Freelance Copy/Research/Art/Editorial

Martine Bury, Andrew Gilling, Kevin Giordano, Shaheem Reid, Mark Schwartz

Interns

Elizabeth Bruneau, Rome K. Neal

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Newsweek

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USA Today

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Rolling Stone

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THE GUEST LIST

"Hip hop makes you feel like you can do whatever you want," says **S.H. Fernando Jr.**, "especially when some kid with one-tenth of the opportunities you have goes out, cuts a record, and becomes a star." Skiz himself seems capable of pretty much anything. The rap scribe is completing the follow-up to his 1994 book, *The New Beats: Exploring the Music, Culture, and Attitudes of Hip Hop* (Anchor), while simultaneously working on his independent music label and profiling super-duper rap stars such as Busta Rhymes ("Dreaded Future," page 92).



SKIZ

"I'm infuriated at the way we treat prisoners in this country," says journalist **Randi Glatzer**. She unearthed a shameful breakdown within the correctional system in "Soul in the Hole," (page 113) the story of Calvin Moore, an inmate who died from a psychological breakdown while in solitary confinement at Alabama's Kilby Correctional Facility. "I kept thinking, 'How could they leave this kid in solitary?'" she says. Randi's piece launches "The System," VIBE's new series of investigative reports on America's criminal justice system. Stay tuned.



RANDI G.

FIRESTARTER



"You can be fully clothed and still get somebody aroused," says Marc Baptiste, VIBE's intrepid photographer-at-large. "That's real sensuality." Whether he's shooting portraits of the around-the-way moguls behind the FUBU phenomenon ("Rags to Riches," page 124) or snapping off-the-hook fashion stories like this month's "Dangerous Liaisons" (page 96), Baptiste tries to get out of the way and let his subjects' emoldering fierceness emerge. "It's like a first date," he says. "If you want it too much, you might lose it."



MR. BAPTISTE

Before Amaldo Anaya-Lucca became a sought-after fashion lensman, he dreamed of working for Ralph Lauren. "Every six months I'd interview, but wouldn't get the job," he says. His persistence paid off in 1988, when he landed a retail position that led to his first shoot for the Ralph Lauren Purple Label ad campaign. Amaldo continues to shoot for Mr. Polo as well as *Interview* and *Raygun* magazines—but of course he saved the hot stuff for VIBE fashion features like "Fresh Air" (November 1998) and this month's "All the Way Live," (page 120).

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL

Senior Articles Editor Jeannine Amber initially approached VIBE in 1997 to write a piece about Jerry Springer ("Jerry's Kids," April 1998)—the first and still-definitive article on the talk show trashmaster. Since joining the staff full time last August, she has chronicled the making and unmaking of Hype Williams's directorial debut, *Belly* ("Belly of the Beast," December 1998/January 1999). This month, Amber introduces a new series she spearheaded called "The System" (see above), and enlists the talents of *New York Times* writer Michel Marriott (she has been a fan of his for years) to write VIBE's FUBU story (see above). This lady is really earning a reputation for making positive contributions. For instance, she has single-handedly elevated the office's comfy quotient with her scented candles, herbal teas, and plush upholstered armchair. "If you're going to be at work 28 hours a day," says the fresh-faced editrix, "you might as well have a nice place to sit."

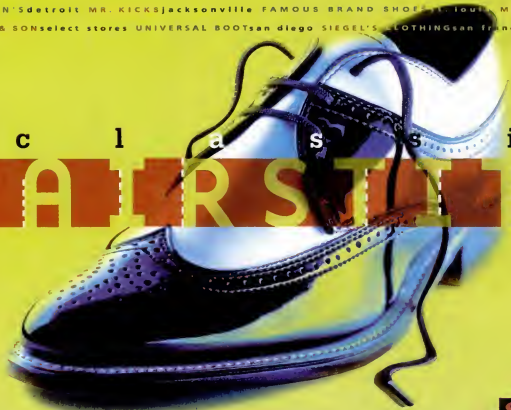
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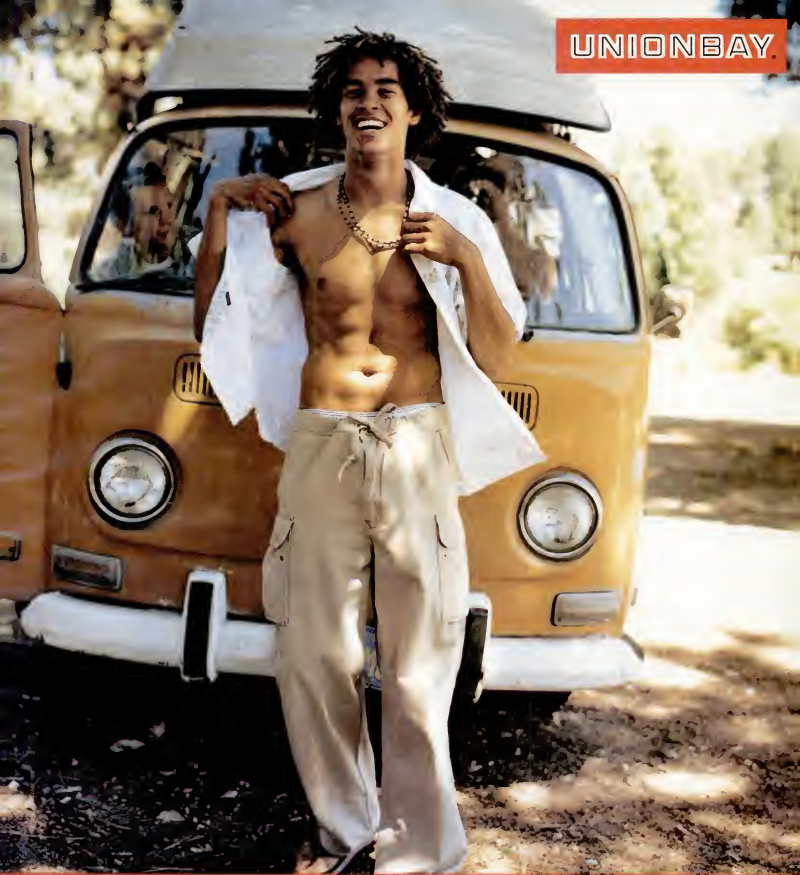
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—Aaron Spelling's son Randy on his rap group, Lynx (TV Guide)

"Microphones, mixers, turntables, studios won't work. You won't be able to record shit. We'll have to rhyme in the streets, like some slave shit back in the day."

—Busta Rhymes on the anticipated impact of the Y2K computer bug (Entertainment Weekly)

"Brandy was just with Usher; why would she want to be with me? I like it fresh, you know? Like when you go car shopping, you want a new car. I don't want nothing that's been used. No disrespect."

—Mase on the rumor that Brandy's his girl (RadioScope's Electronic Urban Report)

"We can't live in an irresponsible way, as in the case of...Tupac and the Notorious B.I.G.... If you play with fire, you will die that way."

—Seal on the consequence of disrespecting life (The Boston Globe)

"It's not what enters men's mouths that's evil. It's what comes out of their mouths that is."

—from *The Alchemist* (HarperFlamingo, 1998) by Paulo Coelho

editor's choice

"In all situations, you reap what you sow. I just sowed a breath so I can reap a breath."

—Reverend Run, *Inside the Music* (Dimitri Ehrlich, 1997)

from the VIBE vault

JUNE/JULY 1997

"I like it when people talk about how I'm stupid and country. 'Cause when they start thinking that, that's when I beat 'em."

—Master P, businessman extraordinaire

MAY 1998

"I ain't got no style. Whatever the beat demands of me...I do it."

—Slick Rick on his flow

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—Quincy Jones

Featuring four new songs, including "I'm Yours" with *Siedah Garrett* and *El DeBarge* and introducing *Cateto* with "Something I Cannot Have."

Includes performances by:

Patti Austin

George Benson

Brandy

Naomi Campbell

Tevin Campbell

Rachelle Ferrell

Aretha Franklin

Aaron Hall

Heavy D

Benard Ighner

Janice Ingram

Ronald Isley

Michael Jackson

R. Kelly

Brian McKnight

James Moody

*Frank Sinatra with Count Basie
& His Orchestra*

Al B. Sure!

Take 6

Tamia

Toots Thielemans

Luther Vandross

Sarah Vaughan

Mercy Warren

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Barry White



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"FOXY BROWN IS GHETTO! SHE NEEDS TO PUT DOWN THE MIKE AND PICK UP A BOOK"

ILL MAMA

VIBE. I'm too through with you! Foxy Brown on the cover ["She Got Game," by Danyel Smith, December 1998/January 1999]? She's ghetto! Throughout the piece she used only four words: riding, pussy, fuck, shit. Can you say, Hooked on Phonics? Foxy needs to put down the mike and pick up a book. She needs Jesus. As for her mother, she's only in it for the money. There's no way my mother would let me, at that age, talk about ill anything. I would've had an ill foot in my ill na na. You want to see some true foxy, talented, sexy ladies in hip hop? Look at MC Lyte or Queen Latifah.

*Opal Morrison
Brooklyn, NY*

Foxy Brown's flow, voice, and lyrics are tight. I appreciate her as much as I do Lauryn Hill. People shouldn't try to limit hip hop. Foxy, keep doin' your thang, baby!

*C. Robertson
Milwaukee, WI*

I have two words for Foxy: Grow up! Every other word out of your mouth doesn't have to be "nigga" for you to be a strong black woman.

*Valerie Franklin
Chicago, IL*

Miss Brown, a strong black female

rapper should: One, not need to wear makeup—black women are naturally beautiful; two, not need to expose her ass, tits, and private area for men to like her—she should already have it like that; and three, not need to rap about sexing or going down on a man for her songs to sell.

*LaTanya R. Heyward
Savannah, GA*

Foxy has nothing better to talk about than Lil' Kim. It's Kim who has the talent. Everyone from Queen Pen to Charli Baltimore has bitten Kim's style.

*Lil Salem
Philadelphia, PA*

I like Foxy and Lil' Kim, but more and more, Foxy's beginning to sound like Kim. Just listen to her duet with Jay-Z, "Paper Chase." Please, Foxy, bring back the original Ill Na Na.

*Kendell Cook
High Point, NC*

It's pathetic that the only women you find worthy of a cover are either practically naked or a size four or smaller. You had no problem putting Mia X in the magazine (December 1998/January 1999), but not on the cover. You should know that she deserves a cover story, as do Missy Elliott and my girl Kelly Price. Lately it seems you've been letting ass take precedence over talent. I can't wait until you

MAIL

give props to the women who deserve it.

*Vanessa
Harlem, NY
(via e-mail)*

WORD TO SHAWN

I commend dream hampton on her article "The Life" [December 1998/January 1999]. The piece is so raw that if I didn't know I was reading it in a magazine, I'd swear I was there. It's wonderful to see a man of color doing something positive with his talents. Jay hasn't let fame go to his head and hasn't forgotten those who were there since the beginning. And dream, if this really is your last hip hop profile, you're definitely going out with a bang!

*S.M.J.
Toledo, OH*

Jay-Z is a method actor regurgitating stories told to him by other nig-

gas. New York niggas used to bring drugs to D.C. because they weren't making any money at home. But they ain't running shit. Anybody with a knowledge of the streets knows that out-of-town niggas can't strong-arm another city. Jay-Z's just making up shit.

*Anonymous
Washington, D.C.
(via e-mail)*

I thank dream hampton for her article on Jigga. But one doesn't have to read it to know that Shawn Carter is a real, down-to-earth guy. He may be on point when he says that most females are only attracted to The Life and his riches, but I'm not. Nothing makes him more attractive to me than the fact that he's a witty, stylish, funny, full-lipped man.

*Bonita A.
Elizabeth, NJ*

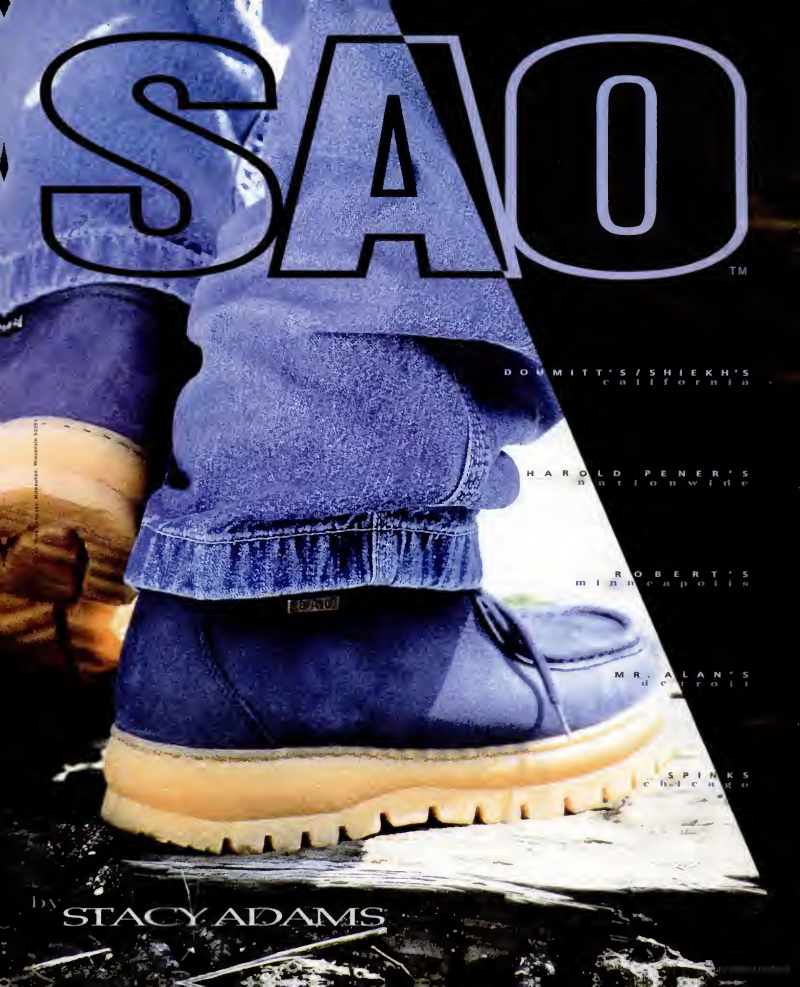
Jay-Z—he's real. He knows who he



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is, where he comes from, and the importance of people and relationships. He also knows that glitter, bright lights, and getting your floss on aren't where it all ends, because one day you're no longer the hottest. You're surpassed by the niggas with a better story, a more interesting life, and a phatter track.

"THE JAY-Z PIECE IS SO RAW THAT IF I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS READING IT IN A MAGAZINE, I'D SWEAR I WAS THERE."

So he stacks cash and stashes it, even if money ain't a thang. If it's all about the Benjamins, do like Jigga, keep 'em so you can get up out this hard-knock life.

Chelsea R. Jackson
Columbus, GA
(via e-mail)

TO BE OR NOT TO BE

I enjoyed the article on Total, but what's the deal with the gay issue ["Total Disclosure," by Cheo Hodari Coker, December 1998/January 1999]? Total makes great music. I don't care if they're gay or not. I'm gay and very happy and don't care who approves of my lifestyle. Everyone is due respect. Total, keep on keepin' on. You all look good.

A. Kaaria Ripley
Address withheld

I have a problem with people who lie to themselves, especially when it comes to their sexual preference. Take Pam of Total: She poses between the two other girls on their album cover like they're her bitches, then she says, "Whatever you think I'm a be, I'm a be that." She's playing mind games. Here's what I believe: She's bisexual.

A Michigan Comment
Kalamazoo, MI

In a time when one's sexual preference seems to be more important than one's music, Total has taken full advantage of everyone's curiosity, as they rightfully should. They are three of the sexiest women in the music business. It's obvious why everyone wants to know all.

F.M. Lewis
Cleveland, OH

I was really disappointed in your Total article. It seemed to be all about questioning their sexuality. I don't care if they're homosexual, bisexual, or heterosexual. I wanted to know about their new album.

Dayman Belle Jr.
Columbus, GA
(via e-mail)

MY BELLY!

Belly was the bomb ["Belly of the Beast," Jeannine Amber, December 1998/January 1999]. The movie opened my eyes to the hustling lifestyle. I cried at the end. Just wish there were more young black men like Hype Williams who have the confidence to express their perspective on street life.

Jaenna Reddix
Detroit, MI

MELT DOWN

I remember Ice Cube before all the glam [Revolutions, by Cheo Hodari Coker, December 1998/January 1999]. That nigga had talent. Where did it go? I remember the man who depended on mad lyrics, not just beats. I miss that guy. It seems Cube got so caught up in the high life that he stopped making lyrics his fans can really love. It's like he feels he's done his work, put in his time, and now he can be whatever he wants and expect us to like it. Cube, your ice is melting.

Miss Foera Woolay
Pinedale, CA

RETURN OF THE DRU

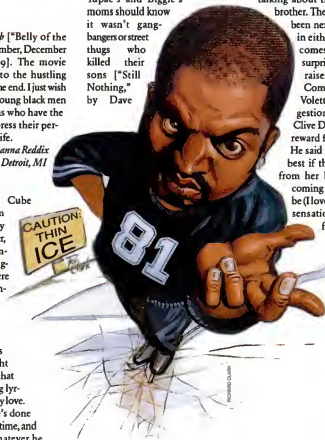
I read the review of Dru Hill's *Enter the Dru* [Revolutions, by Amy Linden, December 1998/January 1999]. Linden says they're not the next best thing but the best thing. I can't argue with that, but I absolutely disagree

with a lot of other things she says. First of all, she obviously didn't listen to their debut. On it, they clearly established themselves as Dru Hill, not some Jodeci clones. Second, the sweet ballads on the latter part of the album, which she dismisses, balance out the freaky songs. *Enter the Dru* is a big change from the first joint—and a good one.

Tameika
Toronto, Canada

TRUTH SEEKERS

Tupac's and Biggie's moms should know it wasn't gang-bangers or street thugs who killed their sons ["Still Nothing," by Dave



Instead of putting up reward money to find the killers of Tupac and Biggie, why can't Puffy or Suge take some of the money they've made off of these artists and hire private investigators to find the killer(s)?

LaTanya Pratt
Philadelphia, PA

After reading the article about awarding money for information on the deaths of Tupac and Notorious B.I.G., I was more disgusted than I probably would've been if you were talking about the death of my brother. The fact that there's been next to no progress in either investigation comes as no great surprise. The eyebrow-raiser was Sean Combs's response to Voletta Wallace's suggestion that he and Clive Davis both offer a reward for information. He said that it would be best if the reward came from her because money coming from him would be (I love this part) "oversensationalized." This from a guy who's managed to place his face on every form of visual media money can buy. I don't doubt his sincerity, but if Combs ever acted with humility, he wouldn't have to worry about what self-created perceptions have been adopted

by the public.

Previn Taylor
Hampton, VA
(via e-mail)

SOFT SELL

In David Bry's article, "No Sell Out" he rationalizes that hip hop is immune to capitalism's disease simply because some of its greatest moments are marked by songs

John Murphy
Memard, IL

about making money, for example, "Paid in Full" and "C.R.E.A.M." [Start, December 1998/January 1999]. While I agree that these are classic tracks, I don't think this argument resolves the art versus profit dilemma. There has to be a deeper motivation

Van Cooten, December 1998/January 1999]! They're definitely on their way to the top. 'N Sync has an old-school boy-group sound and a new-school vibe.

Sharia Ware
Dayton, OH

"NOW RAP SEEMS TO BE MORE ABOUT MONEY THAN SPIRIT. IF YOU THINK I'M WRONG, EXPLAIN WHY MASTER P GETS SO MUCH PROPS."

for artists than money. Therein lies the difference between commercialism and fine art. These artists and their patrons need to realize that art's real function is to connect us to the mysteries of life and move us from within. Now rap music seems to be more about money than spirit. If you think I'm wrong, explain why Master P gets so much props. I know it's not for his artistic talent. If we can admit that money is the root of all evil, we should be able to see that it's also becoming the root of our art.

Joseph "Joey Monsoon" Hinkle
Columbus, Ohio
(via e-mail)

WHO FELL OFF?

We'd like to correct a misleading statement [VIBE Confidential, Start, December 1998/January 1999]: "VC hasn't felt much energy at all from... Rap-A-Lot's James Prince lately." For James Prince, CEO of Rap-A-Lot Records, 1998 was most fruitful. Scarface's compilation, *My Homies*, was certified platinum this year, while Do or Die's sophomore effort, *Heads or Tails*, reached gold status. The forthcoming albums from Yukmouth (of the Luniz) and the Outlawz are also indicative of the not-so-modest executive's success. After 12 years of trailblazing stability and endurance, Rap-A-Lot Records does not accept reports insinuating in any way that the label or its founder has chosen to forfeit the race.

Nicole Ross
Publicity Coordinator
Rap-A-Lot Records

'N-SANE FOR 'N SYNC

Thank you for finally printing something about 'N Sync ["Some Other Bad Creations," Start, by Mykella

HAIL THE QUEEN

Props for your story on Sylvester [Props, by Larry Flick, December 1998/January 1999]. I remember dancing to "You Make Me Feel" at house parties when I was a kid. I didn't know what the song meant or what Sylvester stood for until years later. Your story educated me about the singer. I'm glad you shed some light on Sylvester—for your younger readers who may not know who he was. May he rest in peace.

Steven P. Dabney
Cleveland, Ohio
(via e-mail)

BAD GIRL GONE GOOD

The article on Mia X was slamm'n! ["Mama Mia," by Gabriel Alvarez, December 1998/January 1999]! Girlfriend's paid her dues and is now one of the top female rap stars. Plus, she's a producer—and a great role model for her kids. No doubt, she and Master P and the rest of the No Limit family are the hottest rappers around.

Eric Isaac
Washington, D.C.
(via e-mail)

YOU AIN'T FRESH

I was annoyed by the comment made by dream hampton [The Guest List, December 1998/January 1999]. She said, "Hopefully, people will be tired of this *Soul Food*-type shit." I am sick and tired of people like hampton dissing the middle class because they think it's not what black life is really about. Black people come from all walks of life. Being from the ghetto doesn't make you any more black than the next brother or sister. I was raised in a so-called middle-class neighborhood, but my friends were from down the way. None of us ever bugged out on that ghetto reality shit

because we knew we all had the same problems. Middle-class life may not be hampton's reality—and that's fine. But all of our stories need to be told. Calling movies like *Soul Food* "shit" is just one more way to divide.

Leah
Brooklyn, NY

CAREY-ING ON

Your pictures of Mariah Carey were outstanding and the article was insightful ["Higher and Higher," by Danyel Smith, November]. This was the first time Mariah had spoken about her personal life in such detail. Despite growing up as a tri-racial child with difficulties, she has crossed all boundaries to become a great artist.

Tom Frons
Deer Park, NY

Your feature on Mariah Carey was wonderful! It highlighted Mariah's talent, ambition, and determination. Movie gossip so much about her divorce, love life, and money that these great qualities got overlooked. Let's not forget that Mariah is one of the best voices in pop music today.

Todd Bittinger
Carlisle, PA

B YOURSELF

Jon B placing fair-skinned women on a pedestal above dark-skinned ladies shows how slavery-based beliefs continue to permeate our society ["How Can Jon B Down," by Deborah Gregory, November]. It seems that Jon only embraces the part of black culture that gains him financial success, while ignoring our daily struggles. He should educate himself about black culture before identifying with it.

Morgan Ford
North Hills, CA

ROUGH RIDER

Dear Mr. Dupri ["Big Boss Man," by kris ex, November]: Before you go challenging Puff, you need to know it's not a wise decision. Puff may be too much of a gentleman to stoop to your level, but I have no qualms about raising hell. Grab your books and all your lyrical ammunition "cause if you ever cross Puff, I'll do the defending. I'll write something so atrocious you'll have a nervous breakdown and start hearing voices.

Gratindie Kelley
Dublin, CA

Let Me Tell You Something...

Over the past few months, many readers wrote in to tell us just how they felt about Jon B.

While 65.4 percent dissed Jon for his comments about his preference for black women, 34.6 percent of the readers who wrote in love them some white chocolate. Shiane McIntyre of Aurora, Ill., wrote, "Although the story was small, I'm forever grateful for your Jon B article... Let me say there is not one inch on that man's body I wouldn't like to kiss!"

The Foxy Brown cover story also inspired much reader responses.

Only 1 percent of these could be considered positive. Milton Ruffin of Fallsburg, N.Y., had some encouraging words for the Brown Fox, though: "Let people say whatever they want... only worry when they stop talking about you!"

And as for Mariah Carey—we've received more letters about her cover story than any other in a long time. Of those, 10.5 percent complained about things such as Carey's lack of clothing in her recent vids and on our cover. But everyone else described the songbird with glowing words such as "idol" and "hero." Still, others gave her props for making it as a multiracial woman in this cold, hard world.

CORRECTIONS

In VIBE Confidential (Start, December 1998/January 1999) we reported that Victor A. Fox was represented by Marvel Bittie. In fact, Ms. Fox is represented by Lita Richardson of the Magic Johnson Management Group. The photo of Ho-Good-N-Jiggle on page 144 (February 1999) was taken by Piotr Sikora.

VIBE encourages mail and photographs from readers. Please send letters to VIBE MAIL, 215 Lexington Avenue, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10016 (include your daytime phone number). Or send e-mail to vibe@vibe.com. Send photos to VIBE YOUR BEST SHOT (same address). Include your full name, address, and daytime phone number. Letters may be edited for length and clarity. Photo submissions will be considered the property of VIBE and will not be returned.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BEN WATTS

Dr. Jags, Paragay (Miami), Jemini, Mike &
Sally Potts, Kelly Sanchez (Carter), Joni Rich & Mary,
Mike McQuay (Smith), Tony (Cler)

Dr. Jags, U.S. (Miami), All Star (Miami),
Mickie's (Miami), Mike (Miami), Mike (Miami)

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STARTERS
PRESENTS

WHERE MY DAWGS AT?

PHOTOGRAPHS BY BEN WATTS
WRITTEN BY TODD MYERS LOVE

FUNKMASTER ELEX AND THE BIG DOG "MI RULES"

Just because hot fashion designer Byron Lars is branching out into handbags, furs and hats doesn't mean he's lost his flair for the basics, as proven by these soft-as-butter leather pants. Stunning all by themselves, you'll be happy to know they also work well with a wide range of tops. Accessories by Misha McGlow. Hair by African Pride.

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"TRADE IN THESE WINGS ON SOME WHEELS." Twenty great American songs to ride to: "No Particular Place to Go" Chuck Berry, 1964 • "Easy Rider" Jimi Hendrix, 1971

LIVE TO RIDE

"We roared out of town and continued along the mad highway with our hair flying." —Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (Signet, 1995)

"How many y'all wanna ride tonight? How many y'all down to die tonight?" —Jay-Z, "Ride or Die" (Roc-a-Fella, 1998)

Ever since Paul Revere jabbed his heel into his horse's gut and shout-ed, "The British are coming," Americans have held a deep place in their hearts for the idea of "the ride." More than two centuries later, hip-hop artists are creating song after song extolling its virtues. From Montell Jordan's smooth-daddy slow roll

to DMX's rough-hewn, anthemic hood bang to Juvenile's N'awlin's chassis bounce, it seems like every other song on the radio is telling us to get up, get out, and hit the open road.

The ride's about autonomy. And there's never been a better way to exercise it—to break the boundaries of one's surroundings and leave behind the rules and restrictions placed on us from outside—than packing up and taking off for

anywhere. More than that, though, in the most modern sense of the phrase, the ride is a pledge of allegiance. Of loyalty, of belonging, of an unconditional willingness to accompany one's partners. No matter the risk. Down for whatever. *Would you ride for me?* Like

the notorious Hell's Angels, loading up a convoy of Harley Davidsons with guns, beer, and strong, strange medicines for a funeral run

in honor of a fallen friend. The ride is about more than going to the store for some Phillie's—even if you are just going to the store for some Phillie's—it's about love, really, and braving peril for it.

In creating the sounds that send us off onto the highways, off into the wind, hip hop picks up a tradition previously established in the work of legends such as Chuck Berry, the Beach Boys, and Bruce Springsteen. Doing so, hip hop proves itself to be romantically, heroically, universally all-American. But, of course, at the same time—and this is the music's, and our country's, essential paradox—deeply revolutionary in spirit. *David Bry*



ILLUSTRATION BY STEVE BRODNER FOR VIBE

VIBE 45

"Let's Ride" Monie Love, 1988 • "I'm on a Ride" Dr. Dre & Snoop Doggy Dogg, 1993 • "Fast Car" Tracy Chapman, 1988 • "Little Deuce-Deuce" Prince & New Power Generation, 1992 • "Leader of the Pack" Shangri-Las, 1964

1985 • "Freeway of Love" Aretha Franklin, 1985 • "Easy Rider" Jimi Hendrix, 1971 • "Cruisin'" Salsbury Robinson, 1979 • "The Chase" Tracy Brown, 1966 • "Gone With a Wind" Jay-Z, 1998 • "Ambition Is a Bitch" Tupac, 1996 • "Dive" The Cars, 1984 • "House of Cards" Can't Run, 1998

"Trade in These Wings on Some Wheels." Twenty great American songs to ride to: "No Particular Place to Go" Chuck Berry, 1964 • "Easy Rider" Jimi Hendrix, 1971 • "Cruisin'" Salsbury Robinson, 1979 • "The Chase" Tracy Brown, 1966 • "Gone With a Wind" Jay-Z, 1998 • "Ambition Is a Bitch" Tupac, 1996 • "Dive" The Cars, 1984 • "House of Cards" Can't Run, 1998

Don't Believe the Type

Is Tupac alive and making records?
On the Web, urban legends spread like cyberfire.



The Tupac Shakur rumor mill got a kick-start this past November when Amaru/Death Row released his *Greatest Hits* album. Surely we've heard by now about how Tupac—taking a cue from the writings of 16th-century Italian military strategist Machiavelli—faked his own death. When Pac fans played the new album and listened to the previously unavailable track "God Bless the Dead," some took the line "Rest in peace to my motherfucker Biggie Smalls" as proof that Tupac was alive and well, probably hiding out somewhere, like Jimmy Hoffa and Elvis Presley. How, fans asked, could Tupac be dead if he was rapping about the Notorious B.I.G., who met his maker six months after Tupac was killed in 1996?

Internet newsgroups have given the myth momentum. At least one Netizen has come up with as many as 30 Reasons Why Tupac Could Still Be Alive. "But on closer inspection the story seemed a lot weaker. It turns out there was another Biggie Smalls—Tamar Harris, a friend of Tupac's boy Stretch—who died long before the Biggie we all know did. This person should not be confused with the diminutive white rapper Biggie Smalls, who forced B.I.G. to change his stage name.)

Confusing? Yup. Welcome to the world of urban legends late-'90s style—easily accessible, fully digital. The phenomenon even hit the big screen in last year's slasher flick *Urban Legend*

(TriStar). According to Peter van der Linden and Terry Chan of the newsgroup alt.folklore.urban, "An urban legend appears mysteriously and spreads spontaneously in varying forms. [It usually] contains elements of humor or horror. The horror often 'punishes' someone who flouts society's conventions." Hear the one about the person who wakes up after a one-night stand to find his or her lover gone and a message—"WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF AIDS—

scrawled on the bathroom mirror in lipstick?

Thanks to bulk e-mail—the shotgun approach to sending Internet messages from person to person—urban legends can spread at a rate faster than ebola in a stalled elevator. "Mailing lists on the Web are groups of people with common interests," says Andrew Warinner, an archivist for the granddaddy of urban legend sites, www.urbanlegends.com. "They're like bridge clubs. So there's no more of a willingness to take what is said at face value."

Unfortunately, the misinformation spread on the Web often fans the flames of hysteria and prejudice. So websites such as urbanlegends.com and www.rumorsrumors.com publicly post the rumors with the point of having "experts" (professors, scientists, reporters, cops) either confirm or deny the veracity of the stories. In response to the notorious "Lights Out Gang" myth, in which a murderous posse roams the highways with their headlights off, then hunts down and kills the first person to flash his brights at them, alt.folklore.urban posted this public statement from Lt. Pat Greaney of the Massachusetts State Police: "We have confirmed it is a hoax. We have no incidents."

So while wired folk may be prone to the propagation of untrue stories, they also have access to the best debunkers around. Here's the real dope (we think) behind some classic urban legends.

Hugh Garvey



KIDNEY THIEVES

Myth: Guy picks up girl at bar. After drinks back at his place, he passes out, only to wake up hours later, shivering in bathtub full of ice. A note taped to his chest reads, "Call 911, you've had a kidney removed."

Truth: Possibly fueled by reports of organ selling (not stealing) in impoverished Central American countries. Real incidents with the date-rape drug Rohypnol add to this urban legend's seeming possibility.

MICROSOFT WORD IS RACIST

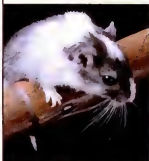
Myth: While using Microsoft Word versions above 5.1, type the sentence "I'd like all niggers to die." Highlight it, then go to Tools>(Language)>Thesaurus. This message will appear: "I'd drink to that."

This is proof that at least one Microsoft programmer, if not

Bill Gates and the entire corporation, is racist.

Truth: Actually, this yields an "error" message. (The computer "assumes" you've made a typo.) The program's thesaurus can't find a "word" that starts with "I'd like all," so it suggests a similarly spelled phrase as a possible correction. If you write "I'd like all racists to be executed," the thesaurus will also respond with "I'd drink to that."

Microsoft®



GERBIL ACCIDENT

Myth: An emergency room doctor has to remove a gerbil from a man's rectum. The man and his boyfriend sheepishly admit that they had been "gerbiling." They inserted a Habitrail tube into his anus—and just for kicks—slept their pet gerbil inside. Actor Richard Gere

has been cited as the "patient."

Truth: Not even *The National Enquirer* will say any of this is true.

TOOTHBRUSHES ON VACATION

Myth: Family goes to Paris. After eating dinner in a restaurant they return to their hotel room to discover that it's been broken into. Oddly, their expensive camera isn't missing—it's resting on the bed next to their toothbrushes. Back home, they develop the film and are horrified to find various photographs of a hotel bellboy posing deliriously with their toothbrushes up his butt.

Truth: In 1992 a guy named Perry Pederson posted a message on the newsgroup alt.folklore.urban claiming to have met a woman who said this had happened to her family and showed him actual photographs of men posing with toothbrushes in said location. However, she provided no proof that the men were not paid models.





ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE IN THE STATE OF **COURVOISIER.**



Like Tommy, Boy

Prince Paul presents a hip hop reality play



jealous backstabbers. (And of course, like any proper opera, the story ends in death.) Here's an abridged page from VIBE's own playbill, detailing some of the colorful danzans Tariq encounters on his odyssey.

Corey Takahashi

In 1969, a band of British invaders called the Who astonished the psychedelic generation with the first full-length "rock opera," *Tommy* (MCA). In 1989, a bizarra beat scientist named Prince Paul introduced the hip hop nation to audio theater via the quirky between-songs skits he produced for De La Soul's gold debut album, *3 Feet High and Rising* (Tommy Boy). This year, Paul brings the drama full scale with his 77-minute magnum opus, *A Prince Among Thieves* (Tommy Boy). Guest-starring everyone from De La to Special Ed to Xzibit to the RZA, the world's first "hip hopera" tells the tale of Tariq, an aspiring young artist in search of a record deal. Played by Breeze from underground rap group the Juggaknots, Tariq must negotiate a world of street hustlers, shady industry types, racist police, and

Sign of the Times

How to keep current while singing the jam of the year



In honor of the new year, the Artist recently released *1999 the New Master* (NPG), an EP containing seven remixed versions of his 1982 hit "1999" (Warner Bros.). But while you're grooving to the new beats, won't it feel weird to sing along with the old chorus, "Tonight I'm gonna party like it's 1999," when in fact it is 1999? Might we suggest these handy replacement choruses to bring the pre-millennium classic up to date.

"Tonight I'm gonna party	because	it's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	while	it's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	and	it's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	and now that	it's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	hardy.	It's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	Get down!	It's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	all night.	It's 1999."
"Tonight I'm gonna party	That's right,	it's 1999."

START



MR. LARGE

Played by: Chubb Rock **Role:** Multibillionaire crime boss
Business investments: "He kept a tight-knit crew, dealing from drugs to prostitution, loan-sharking, gambling, nuclear weapons, rap management..."

Character quote: "Mario Puzo said that I'm the don / www. / mtheshit.com."

Best previous performance: *And the Winner Is...* (Salact, 1989)



OFFICER OMALEY BITCHKOWSKI

Played by: Everlast **Role:** Crooked cop **Philosophy on law enforcement:** "New York's largest crew / It's the man in blue / We stick together like glue / And make lies come true."

Character quote: "You're just another brother / You ain't a Mafia don / Who the fuck's payroll do you think that I'm on?"

Best previous performance: *House of Pain* (Tommy Boy, 1992)



CRAZY LOU

Played by: Kool Keith **Role:** Weapons specialist and salesman
Personality flaws: "Crazy Lou was always ill but highly intelligent. He was an ex-Marine captain who got discharged for sexual misconduct with a deadly weapon."

Character quote: "Uzis / Material / Eating Cocoa Puffs cereal."

Best previous performance: Ultramagnetic MC's *Critical Beatdown* (Next Plateau, 1988)



CRACKHEAD

Played by: Chris Rock **Role:** Bargain-hunting narcotics enthusiast
Selling point: His requests for free drugs rabuffed, the desperate fiend offers his dealer special favors in exchange for a hit.

Character quote: "How 'bout I toss your salad? How 'bout I butter your corn? If you don't like that, I'll put cheese in your macaroni."

Best previous performance: As Pookie, the crackhead in *New Jack City* (Warner Bros., 1991)



COUNT MACKULA

Played by: Big Daddy Kane **Role:** Pimp Supreme, assists those in need of "sexual pleasures"

Words of wisdom: "If you got 36 prostitutes and 30 cents in your pocket, what you got? Proof that hoes come a dime a dozen, baby."

Character quote: "While y'all makin' love / I'm making love into a bidness." **Best previous performance:** *Long Live the Kane* (Cold Chillin', 1988)



DOLING IT OUT

On December 11, pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Inc.—makers of the impotency drug Viagra—announced that failed 1996 Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole had signed with the company to star in a series of "public service announcements." Imagine the possibilities...

DOLE: "PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT." **TAKE ONE:** "Hello, my name is Bob Dole, and while I may not be able to achieve an election..."

TAKE TWO: "Hi there, I'm Bob Dole. Y'know, when I was trailing Bill Clinton in the 1996 presidential race, I used to say that polls didn't matter much..."

TAKE THREE: "Hey, Bob Dole here. I'm 75 years old, and my name is not Prince. But thanks to this new drug, I am extraordinarily funky."



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Eau de Toilette Spray 2.5 fl. oz. (75 ml)
4.2 fl. oz. (125 ml)

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SHAVE FITNESS Skin Protecting & Soothing
Soothes, calms and protects with aloe vera.

FACE FITNESS AHA Moisture Formula
Refines, moisturizes and protects.

Eye Fitness Complete Eye
Reduces the appearance of puffiness, soothes and refreshes.

Body Fitness Complete Body
Reduces the appearance of cellulite, soothes and refreshes.

Body Fitness Complete Body
Reduces the appearance of cellulite, soothes and refreshes.

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Star 69

Whether they're from a former heavyweight champion advising you to devour your competition, or a real estate mogul inquiring as to why your album hasn't been completed, answering machine messages from celebrities *prove* you've got juice. Seems like every record out these days has at least one phoned-in cameo from a famous friend. Makes you wonder what might be on some upcoming releases...



"Hello, Dr. Dre, this is Bill Gates. My advisers have alerted me to the fact that your new album is to be titled *Chronix* 2000. I'm afraid our nation's computer system is not going to be able to handle that."



"Peace, Missy. This is Tom Bosley. Hey, I really need those Hefty three-plies back that I lent you for your video. Hit me on the celly."



"Puffy, this is Goe again. Ummm...I don't mean to bother you, but I was wondering, Could get me into the VIP lounge at Moomba this Thursday?"

"Hey, Lil' Kim, this is Tipper Gore calling. I'm so looking forward to the new album!!! Remember, though, no cursing or sexual content. You promised!"

"Aaliyah. Pat Sajak here. I got your message about buying another vowel. The answer is no. You've got plenty already."



"Hey, Mary J., this is Pras. I'm calling on behalf of the entire recording industry. We got the 411. Thanks for the idea..."

"D'Angelo, this is Barry White. Man, I just wanted to call and warn you not to lose any more weight. I know folks'll try to tell you that you look good, but they know not of what they speak. Trust me, baby."



Hard Knock News

IS KEITH COMIN' OUT OF THE COOLER?

"Keith's greatest frustration is that he's in prison for something he didn't do," says Joseph A. Moniz, attorney for Def Squad rapper Keith Murray. Murray began serving a five-year prison sentence for hitting a fan with a bar stool during a 1995 club brawl, but he may soon be exonerated. "There's a videotape of the incident," says Moniz, "and the videographer swears under oath that Keith was not involved in any way."

We're filing a motion for a new trial." However, Moniz says the chances are slim that Murray would be released in time to promote his recently released album, *It's a Beautiful Thing* (Def Jam).

NOT-SO-MODEL BEHAVIOR

British supermodel Naomi Campbell has been slapped with a \$2 million civil suit by former employee Georgia Galanis, 39. Galanis alleges that Campbell hit her with a phone, slammed her against a wall, and threatened to throw her from a moving car—all within a nine-day period in Toronto last September. Campbell, 28, has countered that Galanis filed the suit because Campbell refused to help Galanis avoid immigration and tax laws.

VIBE confidential

EVERYTHING YOU WANT TO KNOW BEFORE YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO KNOW IT



Little did you know, dear readers, but a few weekends ago, the world nearly lost **VC** to the savage inequalities of life. Our frightful brush with Mr. Black (and not that yummy Brad Pitt rapsalicon either) happened near the Mayan temple-pool at the most fabulous \$480 million Atlantis Resort and Casino on Paradise Island, Bahamas. We were chillin' with Sean John (Yes, Puff Daddy and **VC** are tight like that—don't be mad!), Leo, The Donald, et al., when suddenly that dreadful Michael Jackson appeared. Needless to say, your **VC** toppled from VIP status to a social ranking more akin to that of chopped liver!!! In the cabana-boy stampede to service Jacko's every bizarre need, poor **VC** was stranded—with no Clicquot!—and left to suffer sunstroke under the cruel Caribbean rays. Oh, the horror!! Meanwhile, industry types are up in arms over a December *New York* magazine cover story that exposed the rapid decadence and ho-siddity ways of a posse of party-girl publicists. PB&J, a Manhattan-based public relations firm that promotes hip hop artists such as the Wu-Tang Clan, seems to be in hot water. Company cofounder Jen Posner (in reference to dealing with Haitian superstar Wyclef Jean) reportedly said, "They used to have a black publicist doing this, but they needed two big-mouthed Jewish girls to tell it to these guys straight—'Shut up, sit down, and do what I say'!" **VC** hears that Posner has received death threats over the quote, and some black publicists have circulated a letter demanding an apology. Now, we realize that the PR biz is as rife with shadiness and racism as any other field of false dreams. But for the record, **VC** loves all publicists, especially the ones who gave us our mink Wu-Wear bedspread, and those cute Prada boots that play Will Smith when you walk! ... Lastly, **VC** hears that NBA star Allen Iverson and Chi-town rapstress Da Brat are now an item. Even **VC** was surprised about this one! Nevertheless, Allen reportedly took Miss Funkdafied with him on a recent trip to Japan. **VC** also hears that the hoopster has MC aspirations himself... But then, this is all off the record, strictly on the Q.T., and of course, very hush-hush.

ILLUSTRATION BY MEEGAN BARNES



V LIVE

SUPER JAM '98 December 4, Fleet Center, Boston

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEVE MIRARCHI

Super Jam '98, hosted by WJMN-FM—full of teen stars, flashy outfits, and big radio hits—could have been called *I Still Know What Y'all Did Last Winter*. Multi-platinum Atlanta youngsters Usher and Monica shared the bill with Virginia's Missy Elliott, the evening's token grown-up, and her 17-year-old protégée, Nicole. Divine (more teenagers!) and the eternally young-at-heart Busta Rhymes also appeared, if only to reassure New Englanders that folks from above the Mason-Dixon line aren't completely obsolete yet. Can urban pop get any younger or more southern? Maybe it's finally time for LeAnn Rimes to do that remix with Puffy...

Alan Light

FROM ACROSS ALL REGIONS OF THE RAP UNIVERSE COMES THE MOST DIVERSE ASSEMBLAGE OF MC'S EVER.
ALL OBEYING THEIR THIRST, TRUSTING THEIR INSTINCTS AND REPRESENTIN' DIFFERENT SOUNDS AND STYLES.
ALL COMING TOGETHER AS ONE UNIT TO SAVE THE HIP-HOP CULTURE. THAT ONE UNIT...



アメリカでは読
何と言っても見
読める人は少な

める人は少ない
た目がカッコイ
ないだろうけど



FAT JOE
AS
ファット・ジョー



GOODIE MOB
AS
グッディ・モブ



AFRIKA BAMBAATAA & JAZZY JAY
AS
アフリカ・バムバーター & ジャジー・ジェイ



COMMON
AS
コモン



BLACK 10
AS
マック・テン



SPRITE PRESENTS AN OBEY YOUR THIRST PRODUCTION A REFRESHING COMMERCIAL SERIES "VOLTRON"
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この宣伝はクールでアクションたっぷりであらうけど、
日本語を知らない友達に何が書いてあるのか聞かされたら、



知らない友達に何が書いてあるのか聞かされたら、
とでっかあげよう。分かりっこないさ。



Bobbito plays the tracks; Jewel states the facts

When I interviewed fashion designer Todd Oldham [VIBE, March 1998], he said that watching Jewel perform at the 1997 MTV Awards made him truly appreciate her talent—and her looks. He said she's beautiful. He didn't lie.

In December, I hung out with Jewel while she was in New York promoting her second album, *Spirit* (Atlantic, 1998), which debuted in November ahead of Whitney Houston's and Mariah Carey's new albums on *Billboard*'s pop chart. That's a neat feat for the 24-year-old, who wowed the world in '95 with her 10 million-selling debut, *Pieces of You* (Atlantic), and her New York Times best-selling book of poetry, *A Night Without Armor* (Harper-Collins, 1998). And though she's just been served with a \$10 million lawsuit from her former manager—who claims she was wrongfully fired and deserves a hefty portion of the Alaska-bred singer's earnings—this sweetheart keeps smiling.

Jimmi Hendrix—"I'm O Was 9"
(Reprise, 1968)

J: Sickeningly sexy.
B: Do you know this?
J: Not the song, but Jimi's voice is so sexy. And I love how the drums are so up front. It's pure music.
B: I love the way they recorded music back then. Everyone would be hooked up to a mike, they'd play, and everything would be recorded. They'd release the best take.
J: Sometimes they'd leave the mistakes in. Live music's so raw.
B: I heard a lot of live stuff on your first album. Does your second album feature live recordings as well?
J: You're interviewing me and you didn't listen to my second album?
B: Uhh...I was gonna listen to it as soon as we were done...
J: You better [laughs]!

**Radiohead—"Subterranean Home-
sick Allen"**
(Capitol, 1997)

Jewel tries to sneak a peek at the album label.

B: Ah! It doesn't say their name. It's Radiohead.

J: Sonically, the production on this is great. And they're great live. Some bands only sound good recorded 'cause they have great producers, but when you hear them live, you're disappointed. Radiohead's a great band, period.
B: I thought you said earlier that you weren't into music that much.

J: I was being sarcastic. Most people expect me to be so serious; when they meet me they get put off when I'm sarcastic. I hope I'm not bothering you.
B: You're buggin'.
Don't worry about it.

Shirley Brown—"Between You and Me"
(Stax, 1974)

J: I like the Hammond organ. It sounds good even before she starts singing.
B: Music from this era was very liberating. J: This has style and attitude. Attitude was Elvis Presley for a while. Then blacks came in and funk'd it up. It was like, "All right, Whitley, enough." When blues turned into funk, it got more life. This is so good. Do you know the Marvin Gaye record "What's Going On?" (Motown, 1971). He did that, beginning to end, in one take—nonstop. How inspiring.
B: That's bananas.

J: Bananas. People talk about how hard it is for women in rock now. It's nothing compared to what it was like for people like this who really put their dues, not owning their publishing rights, not even being able to use certain public bathrooms in the segregated South. They had it tough. I grew up listening to blues singers like Etta James and Muddy Waters.

I used to sing at blues

clubs and jazz bars. I never thought I'd do folk music, but I'm not good at guitar. I only know so many chords, so it comes out like folk.

Three Dog Night—"One"
(Dunhill, 1971)

J: Do you know where the phrase "three-dog night" comes from? Apparently it comes from Australia. If it was a kind of cold night, it was a one-dog night. If it was a really cold night, it was a two-dog night. If it was a really, really cold night, it was a three-dog night. It tells you how many dogs you'd need to sleep with to keep warm.

B: How do you know all of this?
J: I don't know. I listen.

Dead Prez with Chairman Omali Yeshiata—"Police State"
(Loud/RCA, 1998)

J: The intro music's sort of retro. Who are they?

B: None of their records are available commercially, but they have a following from their live shows alone. Their shows are incredible. Even though they don't have an album out, people know the words to their songs.

J: Wow. That's a throwback.
B: Most hip hop groups can't rock a show, even after they have, like, an album and two videos out. But the foundation of emceeing is performing live.

J: That's awesome, especially since [Dead Prez's] words mean something.

B: A lot of their songs are politically motivated.
J: I miss Public Enemy so much!

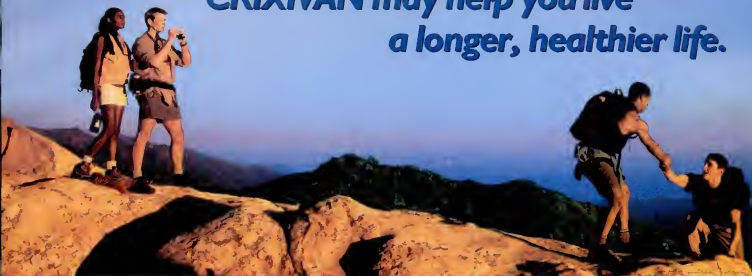
B: This is a group that can return rep music to a responsible state of mind and get listeners to think about their environment and society. I hope people will listen.

Pieces of Jewel and Bobbito

J: This is real nice. It has a conscience.

If you're HIV+ ...

CRIXIVAN may help you live a longer, healthier life.



CRIXIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIXIVAN can help reduce the chance of illnesses and death associated with HIV. CRIXIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4-T-cell count. Some patients may not experience these effects. CRIXIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS.

■ **New NIH research showed people taking CRIXIVAN in triple therapy lived longer and experienced fewer opportunistic infections.**

Recent year-long research conducted by the National Institutes of Health (Protocol ACTG 320) studied over 1,000 patients and confirmed results from another study. The group of patients receiving CRIXIVAN along with 3TC and AZT achieved a reduction in deaths and AIDS-defining illnesses over those taking 3TC and AZT alone. This reduction was significant enough for the NIH to recommend the study be stopped, so that all participants could benefit from the findings. Because the study was ended early, there was insufficient data to determine the statistical impact of CRIXIVAN on survival.

■ **CRIXIVAN in triple therapy continues to hold serum viral load down below the limit of detection at the one year mark.**

In a separate, ongoing landmark study, over 90% of the 31 patients receiving CRIXIVAN, AZT, and 3TC reduced their HIV serum viral load below the limit of detection after 24 weeks (as measured by available tests; the virus may still be present in other organ systems). Importantly, the limited number of patients who chose to stay with the study for longer periods of time maintained these results through the one year mark.

■ **CRIXIVAN is generally well tolerated.**

CRIVAN can be taken with a light meal or on an empty stomach. There are side effects associated with protease inhibitors in general and CRIXIVAN in particular. Some patients treated with CRIXIVAN may develop kidney stones. For some, this can lead to more severe kidney problems including kidney failure. Drinking at least 6 glasses of water each day may help reduce the chance of forming a kidney stone. Other side effects reported include rapid breakdown of red blood cells and liver problems. There are some common medications and AIDS-related medications you should not take with CRIXIVAN. Discuss all medications you are taking or plan to take with your doctor. As with other protease inhibitors, increased bleeding in some patients with hemophilia and increased blood sugar levels or diabetes have been reported. Please read the following page for detailed information on side effects and dosing.

Please read the following page for more detailed information about CRIXIVAN.

**Remember to
ask your doctor
about CRIXIVAN.**

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CRIVAN
(indinavir sulfate)
Capsules

Patient Information about CRIVAN® (KRIK-sih-van) for HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus) Infection Generic name: indinavir (in-DIH-nuh-veer) sulfate

Please read this information before you start taking CRIVAN. Also, you should read the information included with CRIVAN each time you receive your prescription, just in case anything has changed. Remember, this information does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss CRIVAN when you start taking your medication and at regular checkups. You should remain under a doctor's care when using CRIVAN and should not change or stop treatment without first talking with your doctor.

What is CRIVAN?

CRIVAN is an oral capsule used for the treatment of HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus). HIV is the virus that causes AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome). CRIVAN is a type of HIV drug called a protease (PRO-tay-se) inhibitor.

How does CRIVAN work?

CRIVAN is a protease inhibitor that fights HIV. CRIVAN can help reduce your chances of getting illnesses associated with HIV. CRIVAN can also help lower the amount of HIV in your body (called "viral load") and raise your CD4 (T) cell count. CRIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

CRIVAN is usually prescribed with other anti-HIV drugs such as ZDV (also called AZT), 3TC, ddC, or d4T. CRIVAN works differently from these other anti-HIV drugs. Talk with your doctor about how you should take CRIVAN.

CRIVAN has been studied in adults. The safety and effectiveness of CRIVAN in children and adolescents have not been established.

How should I take CRIVAN?

There are six important things you must do to help you benefit from CRIVAN:

1. Take CRIVAN capsules every day as prescribed by your doctor. Continue taking CRIVAN unless your doctor tells you to stop. Take the exact amount of CRIVAN that your doctor tells you to take, right from the very start. To help make sure you will benefit from CRIVAN, you must not skip doses or take "drug holidays." If you don't take CRIVAN as prescribed, the effects of CRIVAN may be reduced (due to resistance).
2. Take CRIVAN capsules every 8 hours around the clock, every day. It may be easier to remember to take CRIVAN if you take it at the same time every day. If you have questions about when to take CRIVAN, your doctor or health care provider can help you decide what schedule works for you.
3. If you miss a dose by more than 2 hours, wait and then take the next dose at the regularly scheduled time. However, if you miss a dose by less than 2 hours, take your missed dose immediately. Then take your next dose at the regularly scheduled time. Do not take more or less than your prescribed dose of CRIVAN at any one time.
4. Take CRIVAN with water. You can also take CRIVAN with other beverages such as skim or non-fat milk, 8-ounce glass, coffee, or tea.
5. Ideally, take each dose of CRIVAN without food but with water at least one hour before or two hours after a meal. Or you can take CRIVAN with a light meal. Examples of light meals include:
 - dry toast with jelly, jam, and coffee with skim or non-fat milk and sugar (if you want)
 - corn flakes with skim or non-fat milk and sugar
6. It is critical that you drink at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) throughout the day, every day. CRIVAN can cause kidney stones. Having enough fluids in your body should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor if your health care provider or you develop kidney pain (middle to lower stomach; back pain) or blood in the urine.

Does CRIVAN cure HIV or AIDS?

CRIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS. People taking CRIVAN may still develop infections or other conditions associated with HIV. Because of this, it is very important for you to remain under the care of a doctor. Although CRIVAN is not a cure for HIV or AIDS, CRIVAN can help reduce the chances of getting infections, including death, associated with HIV. CRIVAN may not have these effects in all patients.

Does CRIVAN reduce the risk of passing HIV to others?

CRIVAN has not been shown to reduce the risk of passing HIV to others through sexual contact or blood contamination.

Who should not take CRIVAN?

Do not take CRIVAN if you have had a serious allergic reaction to CRIVAN or any of its components.

What other medical problems or conditions should I discuss with my doctor?

- Talk to your doctor if:
 - You are pregnant or if you become pregnant while you are taking CRIVAN. We do not yet know how CRIVAN affects pregnant women or their developing babies.
 - You are breast-feeding. You should stop breast-feeding if you are taking CRIVAN.
 - Also talk to your doctor if you have:
 - Problems with your liver, especially if you have mild or moderate liver disease caused by cirrhosis.
 - Problems with your kidneys.
 - Dehydration.
 - Hemophilia.
- Tell your doctor about any medicines you are taking or plan to take, including non-prescription medicines.

This medication is prescribed for a particular condition. Do not use it for any other condition or give it to anybody else. Keep CRIVAN and all medicines out of the reach of children. If you suspect that more than the prescribed dose of this medicine has been taken, contact your local poison control center or emergency room immediately.

This provides a summary of information about CRIVAN. If you have any questions or concerns about either CRIVAN or HIV, talk to your doctor.

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Can CRIVAN be taken with other medications?*

Drugs you should not take with CRIVAN:

SELDANE® (terfenadine)	ISMNANAL® (sildenafil)
VERSED® (midazolam)	HALOCHIN® (triazolam)
PROPRULOX® (citalopram)	Ergot medications (e.g., Wygrane® and Cafegone®)

Taking CRIVAN with the above medications could result in serious or life-threatening problems such as irregular heartbeat or excessive sleepiness. In addition, you should not take CRIVAN with ritonavir, known as RIFANIN®, RIFAMATE®, RIFATER®, or RIMACTANE®.

Drugs you can take with CRIVAN include:

PETROVIR® (zalcitabine, ZDV also called AZT)	BAXAN® (citalthromycin)
TAGAMET® (cimetidine)	isoniazid (INH)
DELICIAN® (flucanazole)	ORTHO-NOVUM 1/35® (oral contraceptive)
EPINAV® (niraparitin, 3TC)	ZEPIT® (zalcitabine, d4T)
BACTRIM® (trimethoprim/sulfamethoxazole)	

VIOX® (didanosine, ddI) — If you take CRIVAN with VIOX®, take them at least one hour apart.
MYCOBUTIN® (rifabutin) — If you take CRIVAN with MYCOBUTIN®, your doctor may adjust both the dose of MYCOBUTIN and the dose of CRIVAN.
KODAPAR® (ketorolac) — If you take CRIVAN with KODAPAR®, your doctor may adjust the dose of CRIVAN.

Talk to your doctor about any medications you are taking.

What are the possible side effects of CRIVAN?

Like all prescription drugs, CRIVAN can cause side effects. The following is not a complete list of side effects reported with CRIVAN when taken either alone or with other anti-HIV drugs. Do not rely on this page alone for information about side effects. Your doctor can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects.

Some patients treated with CRIVAN developed kidney stones. In some of these patients this led to more severe kidney problems, including kidney failure or inflammation of the kidneys. Drinking at least six 8-ounce glasses of liquid (preferably water) each day should help reduce the chances of forming a kidney stone. Call your doctor or other health care provider if you develop kidney pain (middle to lower stomach or back pain) or blood in the urine.

Some patients treated with CRIVAN have had rapid breakdown of red blood cells (hemolytic anemia) which in some cases was severe or resulted in death.

Some patients treated with CRIVAN have had liver problems including liver failure and death. Some patients had other illnesses or were taking other drugs. It is uncertain if CRIVAN caused these liver problems.

Diabetes and high blood sugar (hyperglycemia) have occurred in patients taking protease inhibitors. In some of these patients, this led to ketoacidosis, a serious condition caused by poorly controlled blood sugar. Some patients had diabetes before starting protease inhibitors; others did not. Some patients required adjustments of their diabetes medication. Others needed new diabetes medication.

In some patients with hemophilia, increased bleeding has been reported.

Clinical Studies

Increases in bilirubin (one laboratory test of liver function) have been reported in approximately 10% of patients. Usually, this finding has not been associated with liver problems. However, on rare occasions, a patient may develop yellowing of the skin and/or eyes.

Side effects occurring in 2% or more of patients included: abdominal pain, fatigue or weakness, frank pain, feeling unwell, nausea, diarrhea, vomiting, acid regurgitation, loss of appetite, dry mouth, back pain, headache, trouble sleeping, dizziness, taste changes, rash, upper respiratory infection, dry skin, and sore throat.

Swollen glands due to blocked urine flow occurred rarely.

Marketing Exclusions

Other side effects reported since CRIVAN has been marketed include: abdominal swelling, inflammation of the kidneys, increased fat appearing in areas such as the neck, abdomen, and back, change in skin color, severe skin reactions, hair loss, crystals in the urine, and allergic reactions.

Tell your doctor promptly about these or any other unusual symptoms.

If the condition persists or worsens, seek medical attention.

How should I store CRIVAN capsules?

- Keep CRIVAN capsules in the bottle they came in and at room temperature (59°F-86°F).
- Keep CRIVAN capsules dry by keeping the small desiccant "pillow" in the bottle. Keep the bottle closed.



CRIVAN®
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Capsules

in the mix

The Queen Bee—Unwrapped



7



2



3



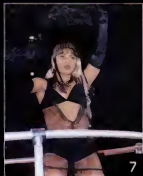
4



5



6



7



8



5



1

Summer '96—Hot/97 Fashion Show, N.Y.C. Back in the day there was nothin' but love between Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown, here taking the runway at the Palladium. Kim rocks Channel from head to toe. 2. Fall '96—High School High premiere, Miami. Bad Boy's first lady gets down Jackie C-style while signing autographs for devoted fans. 3. Early winter '97—Gavin Conventum, Miami. Kim's fishnet dress leaves very little to the imagination. 4. Early winter '97—Crush on You video set, N.Y.C. Kim pulls off the dancehall—queen look and schools Total's Kishna (left) on why the bare essentials are always necessary. 5. Summer '97—Hip Hop Peace Fest '97, Harlem, U.S.A. Kim [a.k.a. Kimberly Jones] leaves the Apollo Theater after one of her provocative performances. Who says blondes have more fun? 6. Fall '97—No Way Out World Tour, Rosemont Horizon, Chicago. Big Mama is definitely schemin' [in that candy red nightgown]. 7. Fall '97—No Way Out World Tour, Palace Arena, Detroit. Not all of her outfits are scandalous. She's giving us Josephine Baker. 8. Winter '98—No Way Out World Tour, Meadowlands, N.J. The rapstress looks very French. Princess with her sequins and platforms. Also notice that Miss Kim is suddenly very well endowed. 9. Fall '98—Dolce & Gabbana boutique, N.Y.C. Dressed all in black like *The Omen*, she's working this D&G outfit. 10. Fall '98—Queen Bee Mansion, New Jersey. The Queen Bee gets cozy at home with friend Jennifer Peres, who's also president of Kim's recent business venture, the Kimberly Jones Booking Agency. Don't you love her for sporting that Nike sweatband? Kenya N. Byrd

The card is rectangular with a light tan background. It features a decorative border of stylized, cream-colored leaves and floral motifs. In the center, there is a rectangular area with a thin dark border containing the text in a cursive script.

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in the mix

Living the Life



1



2



3



4

1. Jerry "Jiggs" Seinfeld shows Jay-Z and Roc-a-Fella's Damon Dash how to be fresh. They chill for a hot sec after a taping of *The Chris Rock Show* in New York City. 2. OutKast move the crowd at N.Y.C.'s Tramps. It's scary how much Dre resembles Sho'nuff from 1985's *The Last Dragon*. 3. Jackie Chan challenges Julie Brown to a battle at the sixth annual Diversity Awards at the Playboy Mansion in Los Angeles. 4. Lauryn Hill (dressed as a miseducated schoolgirl) gets a lesson from the always amazing Stevie Wonder. He congratulates her on the R&B Album of the Year award she received at the *Billboard Music Awards* in Las Vegas last December. 5. Chris Rock and Damon Wayans fight over a piece of the legendary Richard Pryor. Pryor is the first recipient of the Kennedy Center Mark Twain Prize for humor.



5



6



7

6. Smart move for Ice Cube and his new artist Mr. Short Khop to hang with Master P, one of the country's richest entertainers. We all know success can also be measured by the company you keep. 7. Phenomenal poet and author Dr. Maya Angelou made her directorial debut with *Down in the Delta* (Miramax). Here she is at the movie's New York City premiere after flying in using that big ol' cape. 8. Busta Rhymes commands the equally rowdy Ozzy Osbourne to pump his fists where he could see 'em. The two wild men hook up to record "This Means War," featured on Busta's latest album, *E.L.E.—The Final World Front* (Elektra). 9. Pop phenom Britney Spears, sandwiched between 'N Sync's J.C. and Justin, just finished touring with the mega-selling teen quintet. These three look as bubbly now as they did five years ago when they were cast members of *Mickey Mouse Club*. 10. Fat Joe compares his gut to Big Pun's during Joe's benefit dinner at the Bronx's Jimmy's Cafe to raise money for Puerto Rico's hurricane victims.

K.N.B.



8



9



10

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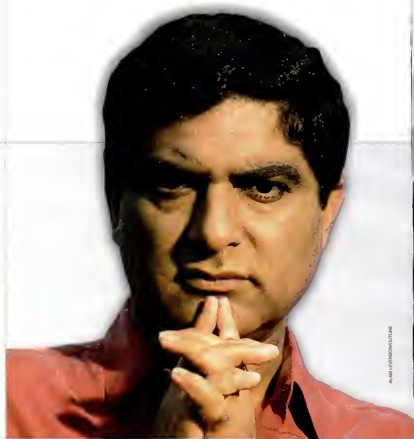
Through the floor-to-ceiling windows of a high-rise Manhattan apartment, Deepak Chopra is surveying a view that stretches well beyond Manhattan, deep into New Jersey on the opposite shore of the Hudson. It's a clear autumn morning, and the blue horizon seems limitless—like you could see straight across the entire planet. A fitting vantage point for a man who has written 23 books on finding the spiritual path to health and happiness, selling more than 10 million copies worldwide while operating an international network of "wellness centers" from his adopted home of La Jolla, Calif.

As the Nike trainers on his feet indicate, Chopra has combined the Maharishi's quest for enlightenment with the "Just do it" gospel of Michael Jordan. He's probably the first guru (a word he doesn't like) to have a degree in neuroendocrinology and Harvard Medical School on his résumé. Probably the first to boast a DKNY wardrobe and a personal stylist. But that hasn't stopped Chopra's *New Age* vibe from touching the soul of Middle America in these days of corporate yoga classes and oblatum massage sessions covered by an HMO near you. The 52-year-old New Delhi native's philosophy of "mind/body healing" has struck a chord with people such as Madonna, Demi Moore, and Rosa Parks, all of whom appear on Chopra's new CD, *A Gift of Love* (Rasa/Tommy Boy), translations of love poems by the 13th-century Persian scribe Rumi.

The West has been indoctrinated by an idea of God which is that God is a dead white male in the sky, and he has only two functions: to punish you or reward you. All of religion has been about self-righteous morality, which science-fiction author H.G. Wells

DOMEPIECE

FREESTYLE, NO REHEARSAL



PAUL L. LITVINSON/RETNA

N 2 DEEP

Deepak Chopra as told to
Richard Baimbridge

START

described as "nothing but jealousy with a halo." It serves only one function, which is to control people through fear. We are in an interesting time—it has been going on for three decades, really—where the idea of a spirituality that is linked to organizations, control, or fear is repelling intelligent people. But we still have the same questions: What am I doing here? Does God exist? What happens to me after I die? Right now there's a huge wave of people looking for the answer in Eastern religion, where a nonstructured belief system is possible. It's showing up in pop culture—things like Madonna on the MTV Music Awards, singing Hindu chants, or the Beastie Boys discussing Buddhism.

I was in India in 1967 when the Beatles' *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* (Capitol) came out, and the band came over to see the Maharishi at that time. Indians were very cynical about seeing their religion used as a fad, and about how the West had exploited their culture. They were extremely skeptical. But [the Beatles] started a spiritual revolution that hasn't stopped to this day. So I think what Madonna is doing is perfectly fine. I think it's great! I'm amazed by her dedication—she will not miss her yoga or her meditation for anything.

I'm not a subscriber of Eastern philosophy or Western philosophy. Over the years, I have developed my own insight into philosophical systems. Buddha says that in order to be enlightened, nothing can be clung to as "me" or "mine." And I really believe that in order to be enlightened, you have to reach a state of detachment. But that's the end result, not the means. Try to tell a street kid in Calcutta about spirituality—he doesn't care one bit, he wants his next meal.

The same can be said for America. Rap music right now is the poetry of our streets, and it definitely reflects what is happening in our culture—the angst, the sorrow, the misery, the resentments of a society that is hypocritical and has a lot of injustice built into it. People will look back and say, This is the poetry of America as it was going through the

People will look back at hip hop and say, This is the poetry of America as it was going through the pain of its adolescence.

pain of its adolescence. I really relate to it, and I think [hip hop] has a big role in our society right now. A lot of the new music, especially Erykah Badu, reflects the transition from the wounds into the healing. Yes, we are a wounded society, but we also need to embrace healing.

We are living in an amazing time. So many things are being questioned. Maybe after all this with President Clinton, we can become comfortable with the fact that we are all sinners and saints at the same time, and that it's okay. That's spirituality—to embrace the divine and the diabolical, the sacred and the profane—only then are we ready for spirituality. Otherwise, it's all hypocrisy.

I've also done a hip hop album with Tommy Boy, but I'm not sure if I want to release it right now. We want to have all kinds of people on it. I'm hoping Erykah will be on it. This *A Gift of Love* CD is different. It's another extension of what I'm doing. I wanted to capture the passion of Rumi. Let me tell you something. Rumi was hardcore. He was the first hippie, all the way back in the 13th century. This guy broke every restraint and boundary in his own time. And he would be thrilled if he knew people were dancing to his words at the Spy Bar in Manhattan. ☐

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When this file hit my desk at Justice League headquarters, I knew I had to call on Ma Dukes to offer a mother's perspective. Get ready for some tough love.

Late last October, a representative of our esteemed justice system, Judge Budd Goodman, gave a young man named Derrick Smith a choice: plead guilty to selling crack and get three to six years in prison, or go to trial and take your chances at up to 25 years. I've discussed this scenario with people of varying backgrounds and heard the same sentiment from most of them: He did wrong, so he must pay for his crime. On face value it would seem that simple. But let's look a little closer.

This young man had been in jail awaiting trial in Manhattan Criminal Court for more than a month because he was unable to make \$2,500 bail. He was 19 years old. He had been incarcerated before, and whatever he had experienced he felt he could not deal with again. When given the choice—which was “good for one day only”—Derrick addressed the judge: “I’m 19 years old, your honor,” he said, sobbing. “That’s terrible. That’s terrible.”

The judge didn’t seem to care. The young man turned to his mother, who was in the courtroom. “I can’t do it, Mom,” he told her. “It’ll be all right,” she replied. And then he was led away, behind those big mahogany doors that separate the “criminals” from “society.” Soon afterward, there was a commotion behind that door. The young man’s mother, sensing that something was wrong, rose from her seat and yanked the doors

TUPH STREET

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES

by flō malone



NO WAY OUT

open—only to see a guard standing by an open window. Her son was gone.

Derrick Smith took the only way out that he knew. On his way back to the holding cell, he jumped onto a radiator and then dove out of the window headfirst—16 floors down. He landed on the very truck that would have taken him back to Rikers Island before dropping dead on the pavement.

How would you have felt if you were his mother? More importantly, how did that SOB of a judge sleep that night? (A court spokesman told reporters that Judge Goodman was “shocked at what happened and very upset.”) He probably would not admit to this, but what he gave Derrick was a choice of life—within a system that beats you down—or death, which permanently takes you out of your misery. To Derrick, that seemed like the better choice.

I empathize with Derrick’s mother. Not long ago, I found myself in a courtroom much like the one in which she last saw her son alive. I too was there as moral support for my 19-year-old son. We sat together and we prayed, hoping for the best and preparing for the worst. We knew that his life was hanging in the balance, and the judge was holding the scales. We tried to tell each other everything we’d always wanted to say. Whatever we did, it was just not enough. I saw this young man being led before the judge in handcuffs, pleading for his future. It tore me apart, but I had to be strong for him.

Whether a high-priced lawyer or a Legal Aid advocate represents you, the degree of pain is the same. And recent cuts in rehab programs have only made it worse. “Ten years ago, I could have gotten him an alternative sentencing,” Derrick’s lawyer said after the suicide. “He was a nonviolent offender.” I know another 18-year-old who was given a

On his way back to the holding cell, Derrick took the only way out he knew.

choice similar to the one Derrick was offered. Not wanting to spend his life behind bars, he pleaded guilty and received 27 years. Of course now he has forfeited the right to appeal his conviction, and he will not see the outside world until he is 45! These are the choices our young Black men are being given. What the hell kind of choice is that?

The people who control the “just-us” system fail to see the other side. These so-called criminals they’re so busy locking up are just a product of their society. Have you checked out the educational standard of the ghetto lately? Can you see how the “criminal element” is perpetuated? Can you see the children who are forced to grow up in a negative environment blossoming into well-rounded, positive adults? Who’s to blame? The same bastards who created the vicious cycle in the first place.

My son has paid a high price; he has had experiences at his age that I will never comprehend. But I am grateful that on that day in the courtroom the judge was not an asshole. The sentence my son received gave him a chance to be rehabilitated and take his place in society, such as it is.

If you are in law enforcement or are a parent or guardian, please think about how you impact the lives of these young people. Remember that there will be a day of reckoning when we’ll all have to answer for our actions. When a higher power holds your life in the balance, how will you fare? Remember—there’s always the other side. **Q**



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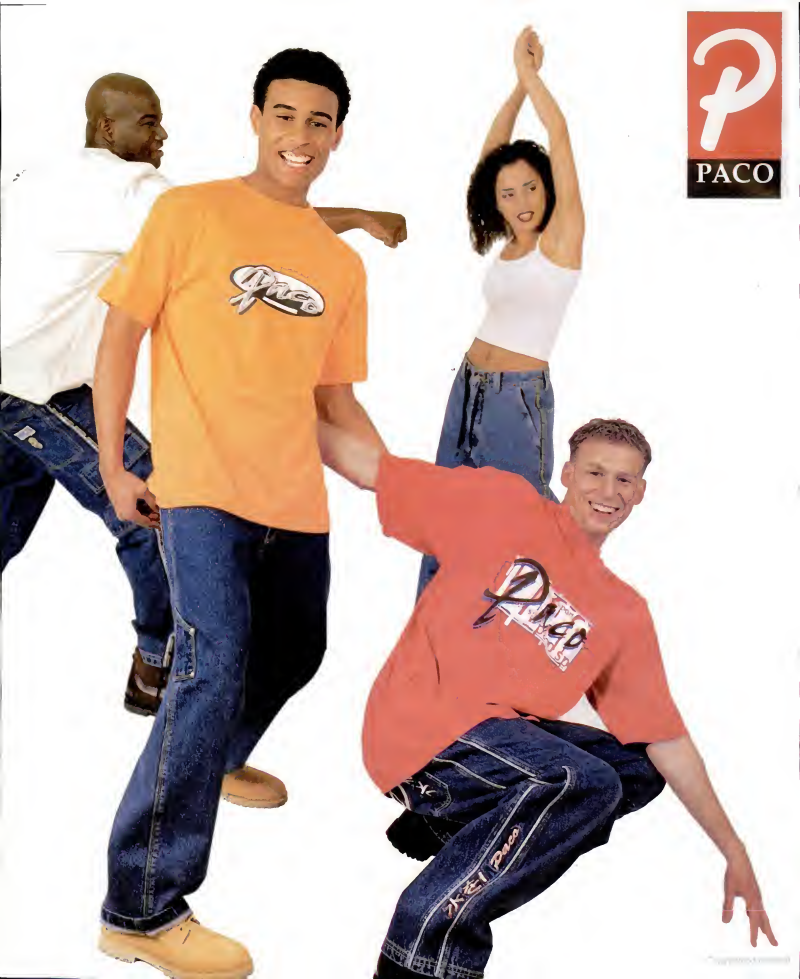
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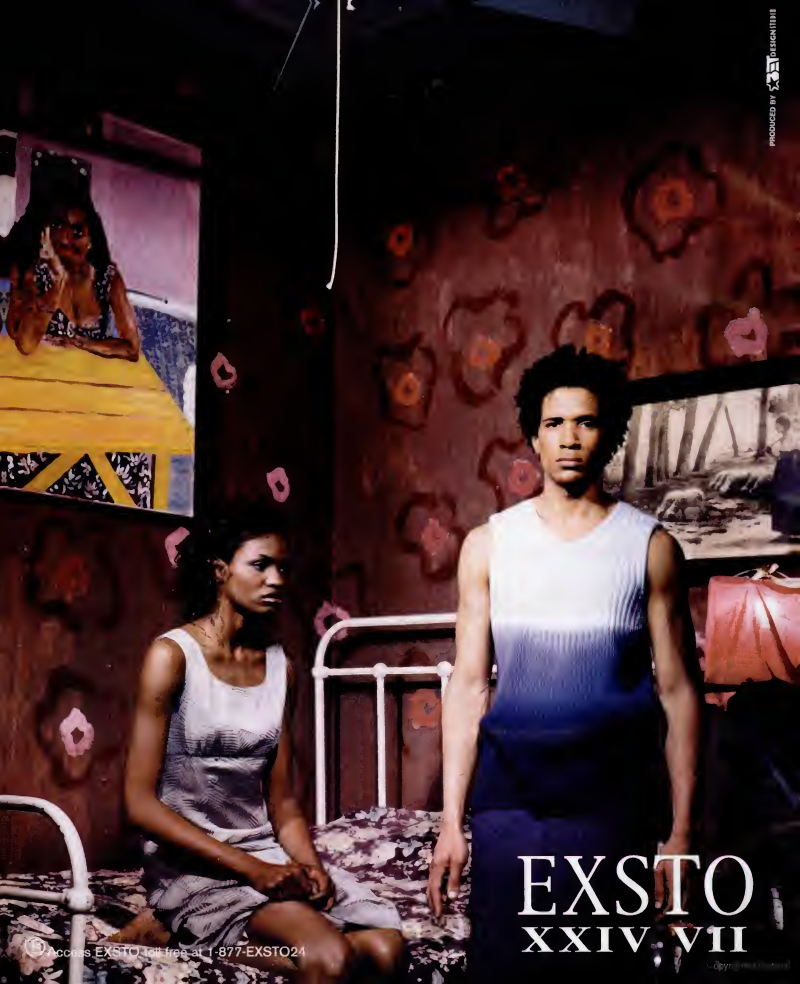
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A collage of VIBE magazine covers from the 1990s. The covers feature various artists including LL Cool J, Lenny Kravitz, Ice Cube, The Notorious B.I.G., Janet Jackson, Busta Rhymes, and others. The text "VIBE" is prominent in various colors and sizes across the collage.

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Jerry Yang - Chief "YAHOO!" Yes, that's my real title.

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Most of my friends seem to be getting married. Go figure.

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\$1,493.55 Taiwanese food - well, after
I bought a \$1,450 plane ticket.

I even applied for my card online.

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you're always online.

One of the few
times you'll ever
find me in a suit.

I started Yahoo! with my partner David
when we were at Stanford. I never did
get that Ph.D. Maybe someday, I mean,
Dr. Yang does have a nice ring to it.

Yahoo!'s first servers were named
after sumo wrestlers. This big guy
reminds me of when we started.



NEXT

PEOPLE
ON THE
VERGE

CREE SUMMER A world apart

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PHIL KNOTT

ON DECEMBER 9, 1999, LONDON

People really freak me out sometimes," says Cree Summer. "I'll just be walking down the street and someone'll say, 'What happened to you? Are you working yet?'" She pauses. "You just wish you had a fuckin' résumé to give 'em."

When you've been a huge teen TV star and you've lived to tell the tale, a little "tude is to be expected. For the record, Summer, 25, who played goosey coed Winifred "Freddie" Brooks on NBC's hit sitcom *A Different World* from 1988 to 1993, has been working thank you very much. You may have heard her as the voice of Susie Carmichael in last year's *The Rugrats Movie* (Paramount) or as Emmya Duff on the WB's *Tiny Toons*.

But forget about acting—singing, a talent she honed while growing up in a mud house near Toronto with her hippie folks, was always Summer's real motherhood. The wistful folk-pop compositions on her gorgeous as-yet-untitled debut on WORK/Sony give off an appealingly earthy spirituality. "That's the irony of life," says Summer, pouring a cup of tea in the breakfast nook of her cozy Hollywood Hills home. "You get famous for something you really don't care about and you bust your hump doing the shit you really wanna do."

Summer spent five years after *A Different World* slogging it out on the club circuit, and even made a disc for Capitol Records. But the project was never released, and that pushed Summer into a funk. "I didn't make music for two years," she says. "I felt so lost about the whole thing."

But when best bud Lisa Bonet suggested that Summer send one of her tunes to Bonet's ex-hubby, Lenny Kravitz, things started clicking into place. Last spring, producer Kravitz booked Summer a one-way ticket to the Bahamas, where they laid down tracks for her new album by day at Compass Point studios and sipped piffa ~~smoke~~ on the beach at night. "This whole experience made me feel like a fairy princess," says Summer. "It's like I made a wish and ~~it~~ it's become true. Sometimes I feel like, How ~~long~~ *long* ~~long~~ presents am I gonna get?" It's a ~~question~~ *question*, indeed. Marc Weingarten

NEXT

PEOPLE
ON THE
VERGE

BLAQUE Creepin' on a come up
PHOTOGRAPHED BY NORMA ZUNIGA
ON NOVEMBER 10, 1999, LOS ANGELES

Try as they might, Blaque will not be able to dodge comparisons to another crazysexycool trio once their self-titled debut hits in late April. There's no denying that Brandi Williams, 16, Natina Reed, 19, and Shamari Fears, 19, exude the same mischievous charm that made T-Boz, Left Eye, and Chilli irresistible. But on this mild November day at Atlanta eatery House of Blues, Blaque aren't trying to hear any of the inevitable comparisons. "We don't want people to think of us as another TLC," says Brandi, usually the quietest member of the crew. "Overall, our sound isn't like anybody else's." And in all fairness, that's kinda true. Under the tutelage of their mentor, none other than TLC's Lisa "Left Eye" Lopes, Blaque (which stands for Believing in Life and Achieving a Quest for Unity in Everything) forge their own special brand of universal soul with poppingtoned tunes like the Mariah Carey-penned power ballad "Don't Go Lookin' for Love" and their delectable first single, "908," produced by R. Kelly.

Although grade-school buddies Natina and Shamari had been in several groups together, including an urban country ensemble, both girls agree that nothing clicked until 1996, when they met Brandi, granddaughter of singer Bobby Rogers of legendary Motown group the Miracles. That same year, Lopes signed the girls to her Atlanta-based Left Eye Productions and snagged them an audition with Sony Music Entertainment president and CEO Tommy Mottola. He was blown away and signed the girls immediately. "They have pure talent," Lopes would later gush from her car phone while racing through New York City traffic. "When the three of them get together, it's like magic. I can see them being my breakthrough group."

And these girls are more than ready to prove Lopes right. "I love the crap out of my group," says the outspoken Natina, with a flick of her tongue ring. "We don't play dirty. We have fun with whoever is around us—even if they're 50 years old. Maybe we can bring out a little bit of their childhood." Ouch! Still, we get the point. Blaque girls just wanna have fun.

Tracy Hopkins

Natina, Shamari, and Brandi



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PEOPLE
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VERGE

SAUCE MONEY Chasin' paper

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CARL POSEY
ON DECEMBER 10, 1990, NEW YORK CITY

Anything worth having," says Sauce Money as he cracks open another Red Lobster crab leg, "is worth working towards."

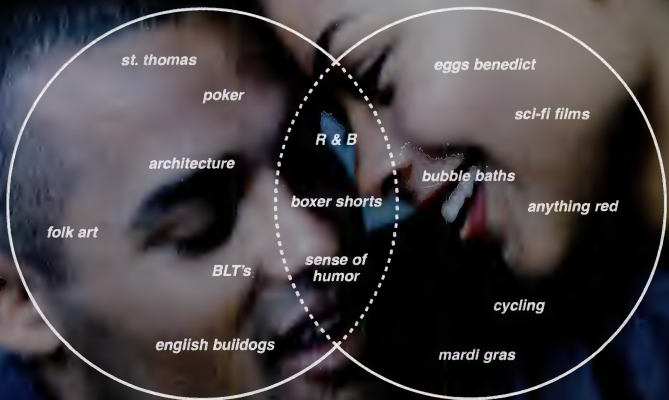
Todd "Sauce Money" Gaither, a product of Brooklyn's infamous Marcy Projects (where Roc-a-Fella associates Jay-Z and Memphis Bleek also grew up), knows of what he speaks. Best known for penning Puff Daddy's mega-selling 1997 B.I.G. tribute, "I'll Be Missing You" (Bad Boy), Sauce spent the better part of this decade serving hard time in hip-hop's underground scene. He did everything from ghostwriting for Shaquille O'Neal to rhyming on the virtually forgotten Big Daddy Kane posse cut "Show & Prove" from *Daddy's Home* (MCA, 1994). All the while he maintained a full-time job—until misfortune struck.

"Them bastards fired me," says Sauce, as exasperated as if it happened last week instead of nearly two years ago. "I was like, How dare you? I worked in the fuckin' mail room at this bank for five years, and it was pure hell. And then I got the boot!" But two days later, thanks to a stellar appearance on DJ Clue's '96 *Show Me the Money* mix tape ("You must be Chinese / The way you try to duck Sauce"), Money scored a recording contract with Geffen (around the same time he had written "I'll Be Missing You"). After the 1998 joint venture with MCA and Geffen hip-hop acts, he became an MCA artist.

In creating his debut, *Middle Finger U* (from the title cut: "if you interfere with how I'm trying to get this paper—fuck you!"), due in late March, Sauce applied the same drive he had playing sports for Allen University in Columbia, S.C. "I got a scholarship to play baseball and basketball, and I was real good," he says with a smile. "That's what happened with rap. Once you find something that you're good at, there's nothing like it—especially if you can make money doing it."

Now that things are really going his way, don't expect Sauce to rest until he reaches the top. "I'm up at 5:30 every morning," he says. "While niggas is sleepin', I've already written three or four songs. God blesses me, and I'm gonna keep workin'." It seems a hit maker's job is never done. Elliott Wilson





appropriately complex





CASH MONEY MILLIONAIRES *Dough or Die*

PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARAH A. FRIEDMAN

ON NOVEMBER 29, 1996, KENNER, LOUISIANA

Metairie, Louisiana, is a long way from New Orleans's infamous Magnolia Housing Projects, home to every member of the Cash Money Millionaires (except downtown-dwelling Manny Fresh). And today practically every homeowner in suburban Metairie is gawking indignantly from their respective front yards, investigating the gold tooth-flashing niggas who had the audacity to park an 18-wheeled tour bus in the usually quiet cul-de-sac. Twentysomething brothers Ronald "Suga Slim" and Bryan "Baby" Williams, cofounders of Cash Money Records, brought the whole crew here (except for B.G., who was locked up for a parole violation, and Lil' Wayne, whose baby's mama was in labor) to check out their newly purchased palatial

spread, and to shoot a few flicks. "Let's hurry up and take these pictures before it turns night and drapes and sheets turn up missing," says Juvenile, halfway joking. He's Cash Money's biggest star so far.

Ever since the nationwide success of Juvenile's 400 Degrees (Universal, 1996), this clique has become the hottest thing in New Orleans (save the Praline Connection's fiery shrimp jambalaya), and they've gotten used to receiving lots of attention, positive and otherwise. Just like the No Limit camp, Cash Money specializes in the kind of off-the-meter, 808-heavy bass shit that's very distinctive to New Orleans. Tired of hustling, Suga Slim and Baby started Cash Money in 1992 as a tiny upstart label, until they inked an astronomical \$30 million distribution deal with Universal

Records in 1997. "My love for music is what got me into this," says Baby, who also serves as half of the Big Tymers duo with Fresh, "and the desire to get up off them streets and turn our money legit."

What's next for this bangin' label? First, the scolding, super-anticipated album from the Hot Boys (Juvenile, 24, Turk, 17, Lil' Wayne, 15, and B.G., 17) is set to drop in March. Then there are plans for a possible tour with Bad Boy marinating on the back burner, even though the group says that a blowout tour isn't crucial to them. "We'll play anywhere," says Suga Slim, grinning. "Stadiums, hole-in-the-wall clubs, whatever." That just goes to show that the Cash Money Millionaires are willing to do whatever it takes to keep the Bayou—and the rest of the world—bouncing. *Charisse Nikole*

NEXT
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Clockwise: Ronald "Suga Slim" Williams, Turk, Manny Fresh, Juvenile, Bryan "Baby" Williams (not pictured: B.G. and Lil' Wayne)

shock treatment

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIOTR SIKORA ON DECEMBER 14, 1998, CULVER CITY, CALIFORNIA



"I ain't gonna do nothing to hurt nobody else," says Slick. "But I did a lot of stuff in my life that I probably wasn't supposed to do."



it's just M-I-A-X—quick, quick, quick! But I'm halfway through and they're like, 'Where's Silkk? Silkk got a girlfriend? How old is Silkk?' I tease him about it a lot, and he blushes."

But Silkk is a reluctant pinup. "I'm not tryin' to be that, I'm tryin' to be myself," he says. "And if you all like tall, skinny, thuggish niggas, whatever, then I'm cool. I'm in. But if not, then I'm still gonna rely on my rappin'."

One of the rewarding ripple effects of Silkk's discovery by the mainstream is the expansion of his musical vision. The process was initiated on songs like *Charge It 2 Da Game's* "If I Don't Gotta," a beautifully rendered ballad that drains the hustler's lifestyle of the glamour quotient typical in rap songs:

"I guess I was too caught up / In these fake niggaz and bitches to know / I guess I was blinded by the money and switches on the six-fo' / There gotta be a better way out than hell or jail / I know I'm wrong for sellin' hope / To my family just to get mail / Some get high off of seex / Just to relieve stress / But no matter how much success / You can't cheat death."

The same album contained "Me and You," Silkk's

"I'm talkin' 'bout real hard niggaz that been in the penitentiary for, like, seven years, talkin' 'bout, 'Yo, you put it down in that song!'"

"I realized I gotta make these songs because I know people go through they lil' ups and downs," he continues as his car races into the Louisiana night. "I know people love homies. I know that racism still exists. I know people gonna feel this [music] 'cuz they [just like me]. I'm willin' to bet that wherever you from, you seen something I seen. Or if you ain't seen as much of it, you know it exist. And that's what you gotta realize when you makin' music—that we all alike."

It's an hour before game time at the Lous Field House, a high school hoops arena in sprawling Dallas. A line of eager spectators is already snaking around the perimeter of the building to catch Master P—fresh from his stint with the Continental Basketball Association's Fort Wayne Fury—and a dozen other pro players scrimmaging for charity in this NBA-lockout season.

"Damn, this looks like a welfare line!" jokes Leland "Pokey" Ellis of No Limit's security team as he peeks out the stretch limousine that delivers him and Silkk to the evening's festivities. Though he was a baller in

standing, Silkk maintains that the Shocker portion of his name comes to light in two specific situations: on the mike, and when problems arise. The tattoo on his lower left arm—right below the memorial to brother Kevin that the other Miller brothers also sport—ominously states *LORD FORGIVE ME*.

"I ain't gonna do nothing to hurt nobody else, but I did a lot of stuff in my life that I wasn't probably supposed to do, that I really wasn't proud of," says Silkk, explaining the inscription on his arm. "And sometimes I just couldn't ask God for forgiveness. Because if I went to church and confessed my sins and told Him I'm not gonna do it no mo', I'd be lyin'. So I just put that on there for Him to always forgive me for whatever I do, and then one day I'll be able to not do it."

And has that day arrived yet? Silkk pauses. "I don't know about a fool that would actually wanna do something to me," he says. "But it's a big world. Somebody just might be like, 'I don't care, man, get that nigger!' Ain't say fo' sh' [that] nobody would ever do that. Cuz if I'm starvin' and it's either me or you, I gotta eat. If I don't eat, I'm dead. So you gotta think about that type of stuff and know that you never out of the way of that. No matter how much

"I know people lose homies. I know racism still exists. I know people gonna feel this music 'cuz they just like me. I'm willin' to bet that wherever you from, you seen something I seen. Or if you ain't seen as much of it, you know it exist. And that's what you gotta realize when you makin' music—we all alike."

touching eulogy to his late older brother, Kevin Miller, who was gunned down at 18 in a New Orleans street dispute, even as Mama Miller was attempting to relocate the family to a less-hostile neighborhood in Richmond, Calif. Also featuring more typical club-bumpin' fare like the hit single "It Ain't My Fault" (with Mystikal) and "Throw Yo Hood Up" (with Snoop), Silkk's *Game* was tighter than a hornet's hemorrhoids.

As the title of his third CD, *Made Man*, suggests, Silkk's latest effort continues his musical maturation. The rowdy-rowdy rants typically associated with his first childhood home, the Calipso Project of New Orleans's 3rd Ward (an area that Silkk glibly and disturbingly describes as "a small place where death occurs a lot"), may still be his bread and butter. But a listen to some of the album's more introspective material reveals a striking repentant streak. "Goin' Around Outside" is a surprisingly folksy acoustic guitar-driven acknowledgement of daily suffering, while "Silkk's Prayer" finds a Job-like Silkk challenging his Lord on the meaning behind His methods. "I Wanna Be With You" weaves an addictive, Usher-like melody into a narrative of romantic conflict and "Thug Like Me" reunites Silkk and Mya, but eschews the bubblegum flourishes of "Movin' On (remix)" for a more adult exploration of tough love. But what's provoked Silkk to investigate the complexities of emotional entanglements?

"It was surprising to me how many people liked ['Movin' On']," Silkk says with big-time enthusiasm.

high school, and he flew into town to play, Silkk has elected to sit this one out in deference to his cold.

Once inside, though, it's quickly apparent that hoops fanatics in need of an NBA-facsimile fix aren't the only ones in attendance. Casually absorbing the gym's decor, Silkk—wearing an outfit identical to the one he wore the night before, night down to the black mack-daddy velour house shoes—falls into the crosshairs of an adoring female fan. Despite an overactive air conditioner that's plunged temperatures to a meat locker-like climate, the young lady removes her jacket to reveal an eye-catching tank top and boldly steps up to have her picture taken with the Crescent City kiko. When she returns to her friends afterward, it's obvious that her night's been made.

"Yo, I'm buggin'—my hand is shakin'!" she says, all afluster.

At moments like this, "Silkk" seems an appropriate moniker for the youngest and most laid-back member of the Miller clan. But the fact is—like the street-smart music-biz savvy the Colonel passed on to his disciples—the smooth tag was a hand-me-down from big brother P.

"They used to call him 'Silk' when he played ball," Vyshonne recalls in his Dallas hotel suite over another stomach-testing dinner of pizza, french fries, and a chicken quesadilla. "I was always with him, so they'd say, 'What's up, Lil' Silk?' But when he turned to P," I was just Silk. Then came the two K's."

"The Shocker" appendage came when the title of his first disc was continuously, erroneously latched on to his name. His serenity this weekend notwithstanding,

money I get, if I'm in my gated community, I gotta come outside some time and go to the grocery store."

Silkk swiftly stashing his piece in a friend's car before boarding this morning's flight from Baton Rouge to Dallas spelled it out even more plainly: Old 3rd Ward habits die hard. When asked about keeping his means of protection on him, he remains unapologetically pragmatic.

"You got to," he says. "I don't care about no jail. My theory was, if it was up to God, then He probably gonna take me anyway. But if it's up to me," he says slowly, "then I would never let my mom go through what she went through when she lost my brother."

The game is over. Seated on the couch in his Dallas hotel suite, Silkk stares ahead at the images that flicker on the TV, the pain of the recollection buried deep in his dark eyes. "I ain't never seen a person break down like that—from being a strong person to just not really handlin' it," he reflects. "So I know that I'll be here for her. She couldn't come home and say, 'I lost him—I lost P, I lost Silkk, or C.' My mama couldn't take that, man. That's why I'm a strong believer. If I gotta do something, I gotta do it."

And it's only then that Silkk's finally shocking. For despite a steady junk-food diet, the growing adulation of a teenaged fandom, and a 20-year-old optimism that people are more alike than different, this kid really isn't a kid at all. Neither the 3rd Ward nor No Limit's school-of-hard knocks lifestyle breeds arrested adolescents. Silkk's young voice is a voice of experience. The family's newly made man has spoken. ☐



PHOTOGRAPHED BY XANT GERBER ON DECEMBER 4, 1996, FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

G - Ball Playa

Longtime sports fiend and No Limit mogul Master P wants to dribble and slam dunk with the best of them. Now that he's in the CBA—and dreaming of the NBA—his mission is to prove that he's better than the rest of them.

By Elliott Wilson.

That's Master P?

A Jonathan Winters-looking hillbilly type growls the question while eyeballing a tall slender baller dressed in a red tank top and black shorts. "I've been hearing about you all week," the guy says to the Master blaster. "Me and my kid came all the way from Michigan to get your signature."

Tonight, we're broadcasting to ya live from Indiana's Allen County War Memorial Coliseum—home of the Fort Wayne Fury. By the heartland-bred gentleman's side is his portly teenaged son, whose chubby grin explodes as copies of Master P's 1997 *Ghetto D* and 1998 *MP Da Last Don* are being autographed by one of the country's richest entertainers. With a *Forbes* magazine-certified \$57 million in the bank from last year's earnings alone, Percy "Master P" Miller, 28, is a star well acquainted with the demands of all-American MTV-watching autograph seekers. There are a lot of them too. Soon even more of his followers emerge—including a young brother who wants Master P's John Hancock on a wrinkled food stamp ("I didn't know they had food stamps out here," P muses). But Percy Miller is, at the end of the day, strictly business. "Y'all gotta hurry up," he says firmly yet quietly, " 'cause I gotta go play ball now." Tip-off is five minutes away and counting. "All we do is go to the studio or play ball," says P. "Basketball is something I get high off of, and now I get paid to do it."

That's right, all you God-loving sports and rap fanatics, the rumors are damn true: Poppa P's got a

brand-new clique—the Continental Basketball Association's Fort Wayne Fury. The CBA is in no way as successful as the NBA, but the league has been around just as long (both have been in existence for 53 years). The CBA is a nine-team league, with roughly 90 players in all. Hoopers make \$1,200 to \$1,500 a week. Playing conditions are about a notch above your local YMCA's. But with the NBA season in limbo—at press time, no regular season games had been played, and the February 14 All-Star bonanza had been canceled—the CBA and Master P are fighting for respect and recognition. "I'm just as good as any other player out there," says P. "Plus, I can bring the fans."

Make no mistake, fool, Master P is a Southern B-boy with superior b-ball skills. This ain't no R. Kelly or Roy Jones Jr. type of thing (the crooner and boxer, respectively, have shot up and down the hardwood floors of the United States Basketball League—an organization a notch below the CBA). Growing up, Miller broke crazy ankles. He was an athletic kid who played baseball and football all day, every day. By the time he reached New Orleans's Warren Easton High School, Miller was an All-State basketball player, with several colleges offering him full scholarships. According to P, after turning down Louisville as well as Louisiana State University, he took a big gamble—he walked-on at the University of Houston. "I felt like if I couldn't play there," P says between pregame dribbles, "then I didn't deserve to play nowhere."

But after only two weeks on the team, P injured

his knee scrimmaging with a teammate in practice. After a year of rehabilitation in 1992, Miller enrolled at Oakland's Merritt Junior College. There, he says he played against future NBA stars such as the Seattle SuperSonics's Gary Payton (an Oregon State alum) and the Phoenix Suns' Jason Kidd (a UCLA alum) in college ball. Pro scouts began to take notice, and the San Antonio Spurs, P says, wanted him to try out. But something came up that interrupted his hoop dream.

"This music thing just blew up," P reasons. But now, with the No Limit empire running like a BMW 7-series down Interstate 95 (No Limit Records, No Limit Toys, No Limit Books, No Limit Films, No Limit Sports Management, and No Limit Clothing), P wants things to go pop in the CBA. "If you can play in the CBA, you can play in the NBA. There's real talent here. We're all just waiting for someone to call us." He's serious about it. "You see what I've been doing with the little time I've been getting," he says. "I've been taking great shots, getting my big man [the center] into the game, getting the ball to the right places, pushing the ball up the court. Who else in the NBA can do that? I know I can be the 12th man on any NBA team right now."

"I came a long way from when I first joined the Fury," the Master admits. "[People] thought I was a joke and that [the Fury] was gonna send me home. I tried out just like everybody else. They had a lot of quick guards. A lot of big names come in there [to run through drills], and I surprised everyone. When

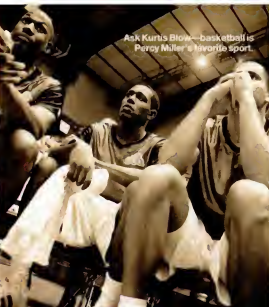


I made the team, I knew I was doing the right thing."

On this unseasonably warm December evening, the Fury are hosting their American Conference rivals, the Connecticut Pride. At first glance, the home-team cat with the No. 15 jersey seems like any other player on the court. Upon closer inspection, though, his special characteristics become apparent: a mouth full of gold fronts, a diamond earring in his left ear, low-cut red and white Adidas Shell Toe reissues on his feet. Very hip hop. Percy Miller, along with teammates Darrin Hancock, Damon Bailey, and Moochie Norris (all one-time NBA players whose NBA contracts expired and have currently not been renewed), goes through the customary warm-up: jump shots, layups, free throws. Master P seems to fit in well with his contemporaries—laughing, joking, slapping fives, but time's running out. The buzzer sounds. Van Halen's 1984 hit "Jump" (from the album 1984) sets things off. But the Master can only watch the action from his warm seat on the bench.

"It hurts when you know you should be out there playing and you're not," a dejected Don P said hours earlier while reclining in his cluttered hotel room. Although he travels with the team on shitty buses, P stays in a separate hotel with his security. "I'm telling you, this is the longest I been on the bench for any team. This team was successful last year with the players they had, so I gotta deal with that." P's confident that he'll beat the odds. "I'ma go through the system that they put you through when you're a rookie. But there's a bigger league for me."

With 8:19 remaining in the second quarter, the Fury's coach, Keith Smart—a former Indiana University guard best known for sinking the game-winning shot against Syracuse in the 1987 NCAA Championship—signals for P to enter the game. Playing the No. 2 guard to the team's shot-shot point guard,



Ask Kurtis Blow—basketball is Percy Miller's favorite sport.



Master P with team Fort Wayne Fury, playing against Connecticut Pride.

Norris, P Miller is looking good on offense, but is struggling on defense. The fact that the floor, laid on top of an existing ice hockey arena, is a superslippery parquet still damp from condensation caused by the warm weather doesn't help much. Rick Brunson, No. 31, eases by P for a layup. It doesn't look good for Miller right now; two minutes have elapsed with P mostly passing the ball. It seems like Coach is about to remove P from the action. After a quick powwow, with P coolly pleading his case, Smart decides to keep him in. Smart call. Thirty seconds later, P dribbles left to the baseline and goes up for a jumper. Deuce.

On the Fury's next possession, P grabs an offensive rebound and goes up strong. He's now two for two. "He be hoopin'!" cries Sarida, an underage brown-skinned tenderoni in a fold-out seat. Another jumper from right of the baseline and Phas six points, quickly crushing his 1.9-per-outing scoring average. Regardless of the premium play, Miller's team continues to trail the Pride by 10. And as halftime approaches, P's taken out with 51 seconds left on the ticker. The crowd screams, and they put their hands where Master P's eyes can see.

Despite his moments of greatness, P spends the third quarter on his ass, frustration on his grill. With the Fury still down by 10, P returns to burn in the fourth quarter with 4:42 on the clock. The defensive struggle becomes even more intense when P gets rowdy under the boards with the Pride's 7-foot stiff, Todd Lindeman, as the two fight for a rebound. Though his team is unable to overcome the Pride's lead, P hits a layup, now he's four for four. With 12 seconds left, P hurls a jumper that rattles out. Play is lax at best, but P anxiously grabs his own rebound

and throws up yet another shot as the buzzer sounds. Air ball. Good night, Indiana.

He was decent tonight," Coach Smart said of P at the postgame locker-room conference. "He's been trying really hard and doing an okay job. He got a chance to spot-up and shoot the ball, and he did that real well. At times, you can see he's really starting to get into the groove." But like any taskmaster, Smart knows that practice makes perfect. "His biggest thing is that he needs to be here all the time. When he goes off somewhere, he misses out on what we're doing." (As of December 15, Miller was placed on the inactive reserve list so that he could handle his No Limit business. He is due back before the end of the season.) But in an interview last December with CBS's *SportsLine*, Fort Wayne Fury co-owner Jay Frye spoke in defense of P's busy businessman/performer's schedule: "Obviously, his marketability had something to do with putting him on the team. As long as him playing is not making a mockery of the game, he can play—and he can play."

Until the day that he finally does get the shot, there will be doubters and haters who think P will never make it to the NBA. Only time will tell. But P has been successful with every challenge he's been faced with. "Let me tell you something, basketball's a game you can't fake—you gotta put the ball in the basket," he says. "Ain't no magician puttin' no ball in the hoop. You can tell if somebody got talent and if they know what they're doing out there. And eventually people are gonna see me not as Master P, but as Percy Miller, the basketball player." That's game, folks. ☐



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NET LOSS

The lockout of the 1998-99 NBA season was all about lots of dollars and little sense—on both sides. The February 14 All-Star game was canceled as \$2 billion in league revenue hung in limbo. The obscenity-laced negotiations between the league and the Players Union grew increasingly acrimonious, and chances for even an abbreviated season appeared slim. To gain some perspective, VIBE sought the opinions of a wide range of hoop dreamers about the NBA debacle.

"If the owners and the players were that worried about the fans, they'd be playing already. I hope the WNBA is sitting back watching everything going on with the NBA—and I hope we don't go through the same thing."

—Chantel Tremblere, guard, WNBA's Utah Starzz

"If we had a union in hip-hop, and the union said, 'Don't do shit, niggas would be home all day chillin'. We're stars. We wouldn't give a fuck about going in [the studio] busting a rap until they kicked the [money] in."

—Kurupt, maybe only with Foxy Brown for a minute, but with Tha Dogg Pound for life

"The big questions last summer were, Will there be a lockout? and Will Michael Jordan retire? Michael won't hint as to whether or not he was going to come back, only that it will give his support to the union. Therefore the league has to assume that a lost season is a season without Jordan, whether he was going to play or not."

—Stuart Scott, ESPN SportsCenter's best commentator

"In sports, we have no regulation and no competition. Let's have other leagues, open-ended competition, and free access to these stadiums that were subsidized with taxpayers' money."

—Tom McMillan, Atlanta Hawks late-'70s/early-'80s big man, three-term Congressman from Maryland

"What the players are asking for is a drop in the bucket compared to what the owners make from TV, ticket sales, vendors, etc. You can't blame the players for getting all they can while they can."

—R. Kelly, believes he can fly; big Bulls fan

"It's millionaires fighting billionaires, and we're killing the golden goose. Where else can I make \$2.5 million, and where else can David Stern make \$10 million a year? We're sending a 77-year-old man into space, and we



can't draw up a collective bargaining agreement?"

—Jayson Williams, center, New Jersey Nets; featured player, *The Harlem Nutcracker*

"As far as playing in the NBA next year, the lockout hasn't lessened my desire. It's a crazy situation for guys like Ricky Davis, who left [Iowa] last year after his freshman year to turn pro. Now he's just sitting around, and by the time he gets to play, there will be a whole new crop of rookies to compete with."

—Kent McCausland, senior guard and three-point sniper, Iowa University

"[The NBA situation] is like a female. You meet the female and she's digging you, but you don't know it. So you start buying the bitch Rolexes and diamonds, then you stop buying stuff for her. The bitch gonna say, 'Hold up. You came in the game trickin', why stop now?'"

—Tony Draper, recreational baller, Suave House Records shot caller

"I was shopping with Kevin Garnett the other day. He's one of the lucky players, he's got enough money. But I see other players, friends of mine...[the lockout] affects them worse."

—Cam'ron, MC (Who needs Mase when you can hang out with NBA players?)

"I'm a little disgusted because I can't see [the] Boston [Celtics]—and now we got Kenny Anderson. I just wanna see what new young nigger is gonna be hot this year!"

—Michael Bivins, president and CEO, Biv 10 Records, Boston's Roxbury Projects native

"It's lawyer versus lawyer, the same as the impeachment trial. As a classroom exercise they could switch sides and argue in the other direction."

—Ken Howard, actor best known as Coach Ken Reeves of *The White Shadow*



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From earth to air, Michael Jordan showed us the way to go.

The NBA's Golden Era—which began in 1979 when Larry Bird and Magic Johnson debuted as rookies and ended, irreversibly, with the lock-out of the '98–99 season—also spans the first 20 years of hip hop. I feel old-school now too, playing against kids who try to bust Allen Iverson's crossover. I try to explain to them that the crossover is a glorified carry, and a carry is a turnover—as in “My ball.” Then I reminisce about the time...

You could try to be like Mike, but stakes was high. During my high school years in North Carolina, playing playground pickup hoops, I witnessed the inevitable tragedy: A kid in MJ mimic mode, his tongue hangdogging out of his mouth as he drove toward the hoop, took a shoulder to the chin that

snapped his mouth shut. I watched in horror as a crescent of his licking muscle flopped bloodily to the concrete. And learned the futility of trying to emulate a truly unique human being.

Michael Jordan palmed the crowd like a ball. Dunk and go nuts. Frequent flier smiles. Bullish—no bull. How did the championships go down? Back to back to back to be exact, then back to back to back again, a total of six wins in the '90s. As Spike Lee, in his hoops-obsessed Mars Blackmon persona, hooted, “It’s gotta be the shoes!” because nothing else could explain such supernatural feats.

Yes, the first pair of Air Jordans were hot, but by the time the pebbled faux alligator-skin ones appeared, Michael’s on-court exploits suggested that

he could have done it barefoot. The stats stack up: Five-time MVP. Thirty-one-and-a-half points per game average, the highest in NBA history. More than a scoring machine, with a career total of 5,836 rebounds, 5,012 assists, and 2,306 steals, Jordan made a full-court impression. A leader by example—not just for the Bulls but for the sport worldwide.

In hip hop, as in hoops, there are few who elevate the game. Even fewer know when to retire. “It’s about being on the playing field while you’re on it,” says Ice-T. “Knocking niggas off and then being able to have that respect when you walk away.”

Michael Jordan was the greatest of the NBA’s Golden Era. But as the poet Robert Frost wrote, nothing gold can stay.

Peter Relic





V STYLE

CONCRETE JUNGLE

WILDIN' OUT IN THE HOOD? PROTECT YA' NECK ON THESE
MEAN STREETS WITH THE LATEST SAFARI-INSPIRED SPORTSWEAR.
PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUAN PHILIP REYES. STYLING BY KADI AGÜEROS



**"THERE'S A WAR GOIN' ON OUTSIDE /
NO MAN IS SAFE FROM..."**
MOBB DEEP, 1995'S "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST"

Opposite page: Green long-sleeved button-down shirt by Nautica by David Chu; white T-shirt by Hanes; olive linen short-sleeved shirt by ck Calvin Klein Jeans; hat by Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren

This page: Beige twill jacket by The North Face; khaki cotton cargo pant by ck Calvin Klein Jeans; sneakers by NSS; watch by Swiss Army; skateboard by Brooklyn Boards

A full-page photograph of a man standing outdoors in front of a multi-story building with several windows. The man is wearing a wide-brimmed hat with a chin strap, a long-sleeved plaid shirt over a white t-shirt, and light-colored cargo pants. He is looking upwards and to the right. The lighting is bright, casting shadows on the building behind him. A chain-link fence is visible to the left, and a set of stairs with a white railing is to the right.

Green and beige plaid cotton
long-sleeve shirt by PNB
Nylon; beige cotton cargo
pant by FUBU; white cotton
T-shirt by Polo Ralph Lauren
Underwear; hat by Columbia
Sportswear

nothing butt



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"LOOKING OUT OF
MY PROJECT
WINDOWS / I GET SO
UNINSPIRED /
LOOKING OUT OF MY
PROJECT WINDOWS /
MAKES ME SO TIRED."

MR. BIGGS FROM HAS' 1999

"PROJECT WINDOWS"

Khaki cotton button-down long-sleeve shirt by Tommy Hilfiger; beige cotton T-shirt by Spiewalk (as head wrap); beige barbour linen and rayon parka by Nautica by David Chu; beige microsheen twill utility pant by DKNY Jeans; boots by Nike ACG; beige cotton long-sleeve shirt by FUBU; beige linen cargo pant by A/X Armani Exchange; boots by Timberland; hat by Polo Jeans Co. Ralph Lauren

CAMEL



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UM Undercooked Meat

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"I'M FROM THE SCHOOL OF THE
HARD KNOCKS / WE MUST NOT LET
OUTSIDERS VIOLATE OUR BLOCKS."

JAY-Z 1998'S "HARD KNOCK LIFE"

Oliverpolyester long-sleeve
button-down shirt and navy
solid long-sleeved Sportswear



Beige nylon vest and khaki cotton convertible pant, both by Timberland; beige cotton sweater with green logo by Perry Ellis America; sneakers by NIS; watch by Swiss Army; skateboard by Brooklyn Boards. SEE THE DETAILS

Dreaded Future



Busta Rhymes—stylistically—has always been ahead of his time. So when this terry cloth-wearing lyrical trapeze artist says flip yo' script for Y2K, people hear doomsday's dope soundtrack and see electric bullfights in the clouds.

By S.H. Fernando Jr.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY PIOTR SIKORA ON NOVEMBER 4, 1998, BROOKLYN, NEW YORK





you'll ever see an elephant in a rap video.

Director Paul Hunter, who has put the lens to the likes of Puffy and L.L., shot Busta's video for "Fire It Up" and the Flipmode Squad videos for "Cha Cha Cha" and "Everybody on the Line Outside." "I have the best time working with him because he's creative and not afraid to take chances," says Hunter. "He visually gives you a character and takes it far beyond anyone I've worked with. He's uninhibited."

On Flipmode bus No. 2, as the miles between St. Louis and Indianapolis grow shorter, Rampage—who used to spend Saturday afternoons in his East Flatbush basement banging on pots and pans, making beats with cousin Bus—says, "Busta's really in the zone with his shit, yo. He knows what he want to make 'cause he sees what he want to make. If you can *emission* it, you can live long in this game," says the burly MC. "He's a genius. If he thinks something and he puts his mind to it, he's gonna do it. He always been like that."

Busta's right-hand man, Spliff Star, whose face seems surgically attached to a two-foot Grafex bong, adds, "He works hard, and ain't nobody seen that shit like me. I be with him day and night, off stage, on stage. That mufucka works hard. He's the black Frank Sinatra. He's for real. And there's no other way to make it unless you real with it." This is high praise coming from the Lyrical Lieutenant and the Street Corner Colonel, respectively, of the Flipmode Squad, Busta's handpicked henchmen, whom he's been working into the mix increasingly since the release of *The Coming*.

Spliff remembers his induction into the Squad, following an incident that left him with several bullet holes in his body and attached to a respirator. "Busta whispered in my ear that we both have the same talent, man, that we could get down and do this, 'nah mean, 'cause he needed help," he says. "He was about to go into this solo. So this was all a plan." Flipmode's gold-certified *The Imperial*, the result of a more than a month's worth of intensive teamwork, proved to be a bumpy debut that cast Busta as an equal collaborator alongside the five other MCs in his squad.

"As far as doing the album in the six-week time, it was dope," says Rah Digga, the collective's Bonnie to Busta's Clyde, who once rocked New York's Lyricist Lounge while seven months pregnant. "We were all just put in a situation where we had to basically live together and deal with each other's shortcomings," she says. "But we went into the studio night after night, and we didn't just write rhymes and lay down our verses and leave. We constructed *songs* together."

"If we ever showed up late, we was being docked [by Busta] a lot of money," adds Rampage. "So [we] pretty much showed up on time. That shit is real, 'cause when you part of a business, you can't tell your boss you're gonna be late and not feel it in any way."

For Busta, as much as Flipmode is family, it's also a part of the trickle-down theory of economics. "There's gotta be an opportunity for people that deserve it, like Rampage, Rah Digga, Lord, Spliff, and Sham. They gotta be able to bless they people like how I was able to bless them," he says. "I know the feeling of being able to tell my mother

A Past Without a Future:

What ever happened to the Leaders of the New School?

As the young sons of the late-'80s Long Island hip hop Renaissance, the Leaders of the New School fused Cold Crush classicism with high school high jinks over Bomb Squad beats on 1991's classic *A Future Without a Past* (Elektra). But after 1993's underwhelming *T.J.M.E.* (Elektra), internal conflicts tore L.O.N.S. apart. Busta Rhymes went on to become an MTV darling, and Charlie Brown, Dinco D, and satellite member Cut Monitor Milo quickly slipped into obscurity.

For the past six years, Charlie Brown has lived with his parents in Uniondale, Long Island. "I started a band called Seven Figure Movement," Charlie says, "with my two brothers-in-law on lead guitar and bass. We also got sax and drums. We've been gigging in Manhattan at [Tribeca nightclub] the Wetlands." To pay bills, Charlie

has voiced radio spots for Dr. Pepper and McDonald's. As for his other L.O.N.S. peers, Dinco, who had lived in Atlanta for a while, now commutes to work in a New York recording studio from his home in Connecticut. Milo is employed as a civil servant for New York State, and is raising his two sons.

It's been six years since the last Leaders of the New School album, and Charlie is not quite resigned. "We just got released from Elektra, like, last week," he says, but he hopes the Leaders will rise again—this time without Busta. Charlie wants to start a new label, and talks about a new single too. "We don't know if we can keep the name," Charlie says, over the phone. "I told Busta that the fans wanted to hear a new Leaders record," but he said they only wanted to hear *Filpmode*." *Noah Callahan-Bever*

Busta, Dinco D, and Charlie Brown at N.Y.C.'s Palladium, 1991



to quit her job. You ain't gotta work for those niggas no more. The more niggas with power and success and strength, the more we can regulate, dictate, control. That's my whole shit."

Busta's new album, *E.L.E.—The Final Word From, like The Coming and When Disaster Strikes*, plays upon the millennial madness that grows stronger as 2000 approaches. Though well-versed in conspiracy literature like Milton William Cooper's *Behold a Pale Horse*, Busta says, "There's just a lot of shit that's obvious that's based on shit we see on the news or shit that we see as far as laws being passed. Things that happen so that new laws are justifiable to exist like bombs and shit. Terrorism. [Things] just to tighten up on niggas' privacy. Now a nigga can get searched randomly," he adds, "Niggas could have shit tapped randomly."

"So *When Disaster Strikes* was just to point out that in the year 2000, when shit hits the fan from the stock market crash to the computer virus to the muthafuckin cash-less society, what is niggas gonna do? Niggas is gonna be fucked up. If you don't got some established credit, if you don't own land, if you don't own something that a nigga can't just take, then it's like niggas is gonna start resorting to drastic measures, dog," he says, his eyes growing wider and his voice more sinister. Busta's on a roll now.

"The worst thing you could do to a conspiracy is expose it, and [the government's] way of reversing the exposure is by putting it through entertainment, so it don't seem serious," he explains, fidgeting around more now like the Busta we all know and love. "But entertainment deals with a lot of channeling of real information. So we got to take into consideration a lot of shit that we seeing in entertainment as being realities, and read between the lines, because if we look at everything and say, 'Okay, because it's entertainment it can't be a real thing,' then we asshole because anything that is a thought is a possibility." Now Busta Rhymes the Scientist is speaking, breaking down his inner motivation with precision. "So this is my means of preparation: establishing strength economically, corporately, geographically. I wanna own lands, dude. I want to be able to own shit that I could provide for myself to the point where I don't really need to rely on the government for nothing."

"I know the feeling of being able to tell my mother to quit her job. You ain't gotta work no more. The more [cats] with power and success and strength, the more we can regulate, dictate, control."

Queensbridge murderers' smoking and guzzling brews. Everyone's happy to see Busta, and Prodigy of Mobb Deep even comes into the studio to kick it with him for a minute. "He's the hardest-working man in show business," Prodigy says of Busta.

Then, as Busta pulls out a tape of mixes in progress and rolls a backwoods blunt, the festivities begin. Taking full advantage of the technology at his disposal, Busta maxes the volume out on cuts like the Rockwilder-produced "Do It to Death," and "Ain't Nuthin' Illa," produced by Rashad, which sounds kind of like "Dangerous." He blows a fuse on one of the speakers, a matter-of-course with Busta, I'm told, and we don't even wait for the engineer to replace it before getting into other jams like "Hot Shit Makin' Ya Bounce," which is practically all kick drums and Busta's insatiable flow. For the first time since his stage appearance, he's in wild-out mode, and his enthusiasm is infectious.

After running through 11 or 12 banging beats, he plays "Everybody Rise," the album's opening song, for a second time. Its bungee-chord bass line and tinkling piano have everybody in the room bouncing. "That joint is dealing with the sacrifices that you gotta make, from a personal standpoint," he says, while twisting up another backwoods. "The sacrifices I've made to get to this point, and what I've got to do to make sure I can protect what I've worked so hard to have when the shit hits the fan. That's why I'm like, 'A lot of lost muthafuckas stuck on what they gonna be / That ain't gonna be me / Gotta get it before the year 2000.'" Keep your third eye wide and focused on the rhymes of Busta. And stock up on bottled water and canned goods. *W*

a lot of work done," says Butch Lee, the manager on duty at Manhattan's Soundtracks Studios. It's a gray October Sunday, and Busta is on deadline to buy out *E.L.E.*, so every minute counts. Suddenly a call from one of the other studios comes through on the intercom: "Uch, Butch, one of these young chicks at the Mobb Deep session just threw up all over the lounge."

"Couldn't she make it to the bathroom?" asks Butch. "Well, you're gonna have to clean it up. Sorry, man."

Busta emerges from studio 5G red-eyed and irie, but still the gracious host. "You want something to drink?" he asks, and then tells his man to order a couple sixes of Heineken. Having just dropped vocals in one room, he's off to another room to work on a different track. Despite deadline pressures, Busta, in his element, coasts through in chill mode.

We troop down to the other side of the building, where we run into a phalanx of "official



Busta Rhymes doesn't like to have anyone around except the engineer when he records vocals, so he asks that all visitors wait outside in the lounge. "Busta lives in here. And he's not just partying—he gets

PELLE PELLE

MARC BUCHANAN

le Pelle





*Whitney Porsche returns from Paris,
where she checked out the spring haute
couture collections and hung out with
John Galliano, Puff Daddy, and
Naomi Campbell.*

*Navy silk chiffon panel top, navy cotton bandeaux top,
navy cotton panel with panel, and shoes,
all by CoStume National; clutch purse by Louis Vuitton;
sunglasses by Fendi*



V FASHION

dangerous liaisons

Two men, two lives, and lots of drama—that's the steelo of today's modern fly girl. But when you're living this kind of music-video lifestyle, you always end up asking yourself, Who's the mack?

Photographs by Marc Baptiste
Styling by Emil Wilbekin

Whitney's man Donovan, an industrial engineer who spends his time between London, New York, and Tokyo, loves his fierce lady.

Black cotton and linen three-button unstructured jacket and gray cotton button-down shirt, both by Gucci; light gray nylon and elastin stretch vinyl top by Dolci & Gabbana; diamond earrings by H.Stein; headband by Kevin Woon Face & Body: Complexion Perfection matte powder by Clinique in Chestnut; double-effect eye pencil by CHANEL in Solar; eye dust by FACE Stockholm in Bronze; mascara by L'ANCÔME; Extensions in Black; lip gloss by M.A.C in Greed; ultra facial moisturizer by Kiehl's

Whitney chills out in her New York City penthouse. Isn't it fit for a princess?

Black acetate and nylon cut-out tank dress by Stephen Sprouse;
shoes by Manolo Blahnik

Face & Body: Pressed powder by M.A.C in C8; liquid eyeliner in
Steel Blue by Yves St. Laurent; body butter by The Body Shop in
Nut; fragrance ANGEL Innocence by Thierry Mugler

dangerous
little



danger
liaison

Donovan (who speaks seven languages) is an accomplished painter, and he creates shelters for homeless people. He's checking out his girlfriend from his high-rise.

*Navy wool beaded stripe three-piece suit, black and white cotton stripe dress shirt, and black and white silk herringbone tie, all by Ralph Lauren; Purple Label watch by I.W.G.C.; vintage cufflinks; vintage telescope
Face & Body: Face fitness moisturizer by Polo Sport Ralph Lauren; post-shave healer by Clinique; skin supplies for men; fragrance by CREED in Green Irish Tweed; lip moisturizer by Blistex in SPF 15*



Meet Whitney's other man Jerome, president and CEO of the very successful platinum hit-makin' Dark Chocolate Records and a successful recording artist in his own right.

Black terry cloth cotton men-skirt bath towel with blue trim by Fila; boots by Timberland; watch by Hoka; Fila t-shirt; Antigua jewelry by Aveda Marc; cocoa butter cream by Palmer's; Fila; Old hair photographer by Mark in AS; Fila; Hoka; Tiffany Sport by Tiffany.

*Living the high life, Whitney and Jerome
enjoy each other—and the vista from the terrace.
Later: Cristal and a dip in the pool.*

*Lavender silk evening dress with floral bouquet by Dolce & Gabbani; shoes by Manolo
Blahnik; black cotton V-neck T-shirt with rhinestone trim and black cotton flat front
pant, both by Gianni Versace Men's; boots by Kenneth Cole; watch by Rolex*

hang
lairs



One of Whitney's girls has a big mouth. And one of Jerome's MCs wants to get with Whitney. And don't sleep on Donovan's telescope. Whitney's tricks cause a big fight. Drama!

Brown cotton pinstripe suit and white cotton dress shirt, both by Emporio Armani; black silk tank top and black cotton and elastin cargo pant, both by Dolce and Gabbana; watch by Rolex

ERIOUS
| SONS



She got game. Whitney's not playing herself—forget those ruffnecks, she's off to see man No. 3: an Academy Award-winning actor. And she's going from zero to 70 in 3.5 seconds.

Silver metal mesh dress with aqua mesh overlay by Guirri Versace
Women's; shoes by Kenneth Cole; car, BMW M Coupe
Face & Body: Lightening Shimmer lotion by Benefit; double-effect
eye pencil by CHANEL in Blackberry; line-minimizing foundation by
L'ORÉAL in Natural Design; illuminating stick by NARS in South
Beach; lipgloss and lip gloss, both by M.A.C in Chestnut and Desire;
fragrance VIS Versus by Guirri Versace SEE THE DETAILS





MAMÍ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ SAID I KNOCK ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ YOU OUT

She's lived alone in New York City since she was 15. She's won a national amateur female boxing title. Now **Patricia Alcivar** is battling for a woman's right to fight in the Olympics—one kick-ass punch at a time.

By Elena Cabral.

PHOTOGRAPH BY EVE M. FOWLER

May 31, 1998. A crowd has started to filter into the 17,000-seat Arrowhead Pond Arena in Anaheim, Calif. It's the second national amateur women's boxing championship, hosted by USA Boxing (the association that governs the country's Olympic-style competition). Hanging from the ceiling, a Jumbo Tron screen plays highlights from a recent match. Across a digital display mounted on the stands' lower tier, the names of tonight's fighters zip along, one by one, in big red letters. Twenty-one-year-old Patricia Alcivar slips into the cavernous hall, quietly making her way across the floor. Pretty and girlish in jean shorts and sneakers, she looks as fragile as the ceramic figurine of the Virgin Mary carefully wrapped in tissue, deep in her backpack. A gift from her mother in Barranquilla, Colombia, the figurine is a good luck charm that occupies a space next to Alcivar's gloves, headgear, and breastguard. Alcivar is the nation's bantamweight champion, and she has come here to defend her title.

The first time Alcivar boxed in front of an audience, her baby-faced looks worked against her. That was at N.Y.C.'s 1996 Golden Gloves tournament, the top honor for local amateur fighters, in a bout against Walkiria

champion who was a New York State boxing commissioner from 1977 to 1994, opposed granting female fighters licenses. "I hold women on a pedestal because they're feminine," he said to *The News World* newspaper in 1978. "I just can't see a woman lying on the floor, bleeding from the nose or mouth."

In 1991, though, Dallas Malloy, a 16-year-old high school student from Bellingham, Wash., sued USA Boxing on the grounds of gender discrimination. The court decision overturned a regulation more than 100 years old that prohibited women from boxing in amateur

only 41 countries sanction women's boxing—about half the number needed to successfully petition the International Olympic Committee. "We have to convince a lot of old dinosaurs that this program is here to stay," says Pino.

Last April Alcivar won New York City's Golden Gloves in a bloody-nose bout with Deborah Sung Stein. Stein, a kickboxer making her boxing debut, came out strong with a flurry of punches before succumbing to Alcivar's quick combinations and powerful right hand.

"During the fight, it's will against will," says Alcivar. "The bigger will wins. That's it. When it's over, it's over. No hard feelings."

This month Alcivar begins her defense of the crown, with the final match to be televised locally on the MSG Network in April. "She's like a matador," says Denise Lutrick, a light welterweight pro who has sparred with Alcivar. "She pivots well, she's quick. She stays on her opponent and never leaves the ring with regret."

"I want to be recognized as a *skillful* boxer," says Alcivar. "Not a brawler, or a 'catfighter,' like so many people refer to women boxers."

In July of 1998, Alcivar fought in Scranton, Pa., with a team of American boxers who defeated Canada in



★ "I want to be recognized as a *skillful* boxer," says Alcivar, "not a brawler, or a 'catfighter,' like so many people refer to women boxers." ★

Barbosa. The heckling started as soon as Alcivar, draped in an oversized robe, approached the ring. "Awww," yelled the men from the stands. "Don't let her fight! She's too cute.... She's too young.... She'll mess up her face!" After Alcivar landed her first few punches, though, the catcalls turned into applause. "I let them see the fight," says the 5-foot-6-inch 119-pounder of the early victory, "and they quickly changed their minds."

A year later, Alcivar was still changing minds. In July of '97, she paid her own way to the first national amateur women's tournament in Augusta, Ga. Coming in as a little-known long shot, she advanced to the finals and defeated the now professional "Downtown" Leona Brown—earning the national title and becoming the first woman to be named USA Boxing's Athlete of the Month. "Brown was like a Mike Tyson," says Alcivar's trainer, Martin Snow. "Nobody gave Patricia a chance."

Alcivar is part of a new generation of female athletes who are breaking barriers in a sport long dominated by men. For most of the century, women have been fighting to get onto the canvas—filing lawsuits and even staging hunger strikes. Along the way, they've battled sexist ridicule from skeptical boxing fans as well as a steadfast belief among boxing officials that the square circle is no place for the "fairer sex." Floyd Patterson, a two-time former heavyweight

competitions in America. Since October 1993, when the ruling went into effect, scores of female fighters have stepped into the ring. The number of registered women amateur boxers increased from 340 in 1996 to 1,281 in 1998.

These days the fans don't seem to mind watching women trade blows. Last February, when ESPN2 held its first all-female professional card at the Grand Casino in Biloxi, Miss., they quickly sold out a 1,600-seat venue that has hosted male headlines such as Buster Douglas and James Toney. The event earned double the average cable-TV ratings of men's bouts on ESPN2 from the previous year.

While Don King's money-grubbing antics and Mike Tyson's temper tantrums have overshadowed the men's sport, women's boxing is revitalizing a jaded industry. "It's new, it's fresh, it gets back to the basics of the sport," says Rick Kulis, president of Event Entertainment, which promotes amateur and professional women's bouts. "Men's boxing has become so much about money, it's lost its excitement for the fans."

"Women fight their hearts out," Alcivar says. "They give 100 percent. It's pure boxing."

A movement to include women's boxing in the Olympics is inching forward. Sandy Martinez-Pino, chairman of the women's committee of the Amateur International Boxing Association (AIBA), has been campaigning on behalf of women's boxing since 1994. But as it stands now,

the first international women's match held in the United States. "Women have shown the skill," Alcivar said during an interview on MSG. "I don't see why we shouldn't be in the Olympics. That's my ultimate goal. I won't be satisfied unless I go that far."

Born in Barranquilla, the second youngest of four daughters, Patricia Alcivar grew up in Jackson Heights, Queens, where her family moved when she was a toddler. Even as a young child, Alcivar fantasized about athletic glory. Her mother would have preferred that she stuck with her gymnastics and ballet courses, but Alcivar gravitated toward more aggressive sports like track, basketball, and volleyball. By the time she was 10, she'd chosen karate as her main game. "I'd imagine myself winning Olympic gold medals," she says.

In 1983 Alcivar's parents divorced, and eight years later her mother moved back to Colombia. But—determined to realize her dreams—the 15-year-old Alcivar decided to stay behind in New York. On her own for the first time, she rented a room in Queens, and survived on an \$85-a-week paycheck she earned at a sealer store. Her diet consisted mostly of candy and food smuggled from her landlady's refrigerator late at night. "I would get up at one o'clock in the morning and steal her orange juice and bread," Alcivar says. "I felt guilty, but how was I sup-

BLACK HISTORY IN MUSIC



Over the past several hundred years, as the events that would coalesce into American history unfolded, music has been a constant presence, changing and evolving, inspired by, and also inspiring, events in our lives. Black music in America, from the hollers of slavery to the fury of funk and hip-hop, provides us with a musical narrative to this rich cultural history. Black history and black music are inseparable.

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In addition, Rhino Records is also dedicated to helping motivate students to continue their education. Rhino Records, with the support of its generous sponsors, will award a \$5,000 scholarship to a student for use toward their college education. Entry forms for this contest can be obtained at all Blockbuster Music stores.

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posed to survive?"

When she was 17, Alcivar graduated from Middle College High School, found work at a battered women's shelter in Manhattan, and moved into a new apartment. After receiving her first paycheck, she returned to her former landlady and came clean. "I was making \$18,000 a year," says Alcivar. "It was like a million dollars to me. So I went back, gave her \$100, and told her I didn't mean to steal her food. She told me she knew all along, but she never said anything."

In 1995 Alcivar lost a martial-arts match to an opponent schooled in boxing. "She blew me away with her hand speed," Alcivar says. "She threw, like, a hundred punches in two minutes." Impressed and envious, Alcivar went looking for a trainer in the new sport. She found Martin Snow—a stocky, 38-year-old former heavyweight with a mop of brown hair—and signed up for his class at the New School in Manhattan. But when Alcivar asked Snow for training beyond the basics, he wasn't convinced she had what it takes. "I saw women coming into boxing gyms, and I kind of laughed at it myself," says Snow, chomping on his ever-present stick of Wrigley's gum. "I hated to see, you know, girls with broken noses and bruises."

Still, Snow gave her a trial sparring ses-

EARNED STRIPES

Long before today's female boxers had dreams of Olympic gold, "Lady Tiger" Trimmer was striking a motion in the cages. But overcoming a mind-blowing fall

Female boxers such as Christy Martin, Dallas Malloy, and Patricia Alcivar may be capturing headlines today, but ask the old-timers in New York City gyms, and they'll tell you about Marlan "Lady Tiger" Trimmer. Now in her forties, Tiger, a sister from Spanish Harlem, forced the doors open for women in the sport back in the 1970s and '80s.

As a teenager in the early '70s, Tiger went from gym to gym in N.Y.C., trying to find trainers who were willing to teach her. Whenever someone agreed, Tiger got put to the test. "They would get an experienced fighter to beat the crap out of you, just to see if you had the heart to come back and fight again," she says. "And I did. I'd come back the next day with a busted lip and black eye, but I'd wear them proudly."

Tiger began to show her stuff in exhibition bouts at the Renaissance and Audubon ballrooms in Harlem. "The ring announcer, the judges, and all the officials would get up and leave as a protest against women boxing," she says. Unbowed, Tiger shaved her head to emulate the Meisel women of East Africa (and soul singer Isaac Hayes) and wore tiger-striped trunks in the ring. She spent the decade's middle years cam-

paigning, petitioning, and calling promoters across the country, demanding that they give women a chance to compete.

Finally, on September 19, 1978, after threatening the New York State Athletic Commission with a lawsuit, Tiger, along with Jackie Tonewanda and Cathy "Cat" Davis, became the first women to receive



Eyes of the Tiger

boxing licenses in New York State. A year later, Tiger captured the women's world lightweight championship, defeating Sue Carlson of Minneapolis. "We fought like Joe Louis and Ali," she says, nodding her head slowly. "We fought good and hard."

Though struggling to earn a living—she made ends meet by teaching "boxersize" classes to children and unloading freight trucks at night—Tiger continued her cam-

paign. In 1987, she endured a monthlong hunger strike that started outside a Sugar Ray Leonard/Marvin Hagler bout in Las Vegas. Her list of demands included more-competitive prize money and better promotion of women's bouts. Her demonstration grabbed national headlines, but her demands were never met.

Former New York State athletic commissioner Randy Gordon compares Lady Tiger to Curt Flood, the famous center fielder for the St. Louis Cardinals who challenged major league baseball's labor practices in 1970. "It's because Trimmer opened enough people's eyes and got them thinking that we have women's boxing today."

Eventually, the never-ending resistance doused Tiger's passion. After her hunger strike, she quit the sport, and has since spent the meager earnings she took from her bouts. Today she is a single mother raising her son not far from Harlem's James Weldon Johnson projects she grew up in. And despite an aching bitterness about never having made it big, she knows that she holds a place in history that no one can take away from her. "You have to have been someone," she says, "to be a has-been." E.C.



A R T C H I T

sion. And after catching sight of Alcivar's clean, straight punches—and catching one of those punches himself, square in the stomach—Snow changed his mind. "I saw that she was an athlete and she was dedicated," says Snow. "Not just that she had physical abilities, but she had a very competitive will."

"You have a trainer," says Alcivar. "But you go in the ring by yourself. If you give up, you give up by yourself. It's not a team thing. You depend solely on yourself. And that's me. All my life I've depended on myself. That's what boxing is."

At Snow's muggy but immaculate Waterfront Boxing Club in Manhattan's financial district, a dozen or so sweat-drenched clients work out to a tape blaring Bone Thugs-N-Harmony and Guns N' Roses. Snow's pet Akitas, Brando and Cheyenne, nap in a corner, oblivious to the racket. In a corner, boxer and trainer are engrossed in a waltz-like routine of pugilistic prowess. At Snow's quick commands, Alcivar lets fly with sharp sets of jabs and uppercuts. He swooshes his massive arm over her head as she weaves and pivots, her long, black ponytail flopping. Snow wants to shorten her punches to maximize their impact, and adjust her positioning to keep her face out of the line of fire. Every suggestion, though, is met with a question. Alcivar wants a technical explanation for each recommendation. The two argue back and forth until Snow throws his hands up in a half-playful expression of disgust. "I don't want the trainer-of-

the-year award," he says, worn down. "I want the Nobel Peace Prize, thank you very much." After a while the two are in sync again. "It's a long road to Tipperary," he says, studying her new stance and smiling. "I don't know where Tipperary is, but it's a long road there."

Last May, the road led Alcivar to Anaheim, to Arrowhead Pond. In the arena with the Jumbotron, Alcivar heads for the locker room while the fans take their seats. Long before fight time, the challenger is already inside the ring. Elizabeth Aguilera, a muscle-thick, 31-year-old deputy sheriff from West Covina, Calif., circles like a caged lioness. She's scanning the canvas for bumps or dents that might trip her up during the bout.

By the time the Boy Scout color guard walks out with the American flag and a blonde crooner belts out the National Anthem, 1,500 spectators are scattered throughout the arena. The diverse crowd mirrors nearby Los Angeles' varied neighborhoods—from the denim-clad homeboys and mall rats seated in the lower tiers to the corporate regulars mingling in skyboxes. Ringside, ESPN's crew is there to mix words round by round.

At the sound of the bell, Aguilera—lips pursed, eyes locked on Alcivar—makes the sign of the cross and comes out of her corner. With no hesitation, she delivers punch after punch, maneuvering her taller opponent around the ring. Alcivar's footwork

keeps Aguilera off balance, but the young New Yorker fails to attack aggressively. In the middle of the opening round, Aguilera surprises Alcivar with a crushing overhand right to the face, following it moments later with a fierce left hook. Alcivar says she doesn't usually feel the sting of a blow during a match. "It's a focus thing," she said at the gym a month earlier, wrapping her hands in yellow gauze. "I focus more on the pain I'm going to cause [my opponent] than on the pain I feel."

Today though, Alcivar takes most of the punishment, and in the end, the judges give Aguilera 19 points over her 7. The fans cheer their new champ, and the cameras close in for the post-fight interview with the victor. A half hour later, Alcivar emerges from the locker room stone-faced and stunned. She hands over her title with grace, though, signing Aguilera's gloves on request. Sitting on an aluminum bench, her chin resting mournfully in her palm, Alcivar takes the loss with a sense of disbelief. "I honestly thought I'd edged her out in the second and third rounds," she says, staring into the ring as though she hasn't really left it yet. She knows there are those who will tell her to pack it in, but she already has sights set on the '99 nationals—scheduled for April in Scranton, Pa.

"If you lose, you give them a reason to tell you to quit," she says. "If you win, it's like you shut their mouths. I like to shut people up, but not by words. Actions speak louder than anything I can say." □



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At a family wedding crowded with aunts, cousins, and friends, music and food, everyone turns to watch Calvin DeAngelo Moore glide onto the dance floor. He rocks his hips back and forth then sidles up to a bridesmaid in a white satin dress. At 15, Calvin's not too tall, but he's trim and muscular, with a handsome profile and a playful smile. He lifts off his baseball cap and waves it in the air, eating up all the attention. "He just loved to be with people," says his grandmother, Mildred Moore, whom everyone calls Big Mama. As she watches a videotape of the 1994 wedding, she tugs at her chest as if she wants to pull the memory of her grandson right out of her heart. She can't reconcile this vision of him with the way he spent the last days of his life—lying on the floor of a tiny, bare solitary confinement cell, wasted down to nothing, nearly catatonic, and, worst of all, alone.

Eighteen-year-old Calvin Moore went to prison January 3, 1996. He had hoped to spend his two-and-a-half-year burglary sentence turning his life around. Instead, less than two months after he got to Kilby Correctional Facility in Montgomery, Ala., he was dead. During his last days alive, Calvin barely talked, hardly ate, and refused to sleep on the cement platform that prisoners in isolation use as a bed. He just lay mostly facedown on the floor. When Calvin did look up, what some guards noticed most was the fear in his eyes. "Like he was asking for help," recalls prison guard Brenda Penn. "He tried his best to talk, but the words wouldn't come out."

Solitary confinement is a modern-day dungeon that prison officials commonly refer to with no sense of irony as "segregation." More than 50 percent of the country's prisoners are African-American, but it's been reported that in some states, including Michigan, New Jersey, and Maryland, more than 90 percent of inmates in maximum-security isolated cells are black. For some men—regardless of race—time in the hole may be nothing more than an inconvenience, or even a chance to prove that nothing can break their spirit. But for others, like Calvin Moore, solitary confinement can be as lethal as death row.

SOUL IN THE HOLE

At 18, Calvin Moore was sent to prison for a two-year burglary bid. Forty-nine days into his sentence, Calvin was found lying facedown on the cement floor of his cell in a pool of his own urine, catatonic, and close to death. Was solitary confinement to blame? By Randi Glatzer

Calvin grew up in the deep South—Prichard, Ala., just outside of the waterfront city of Mobile. Finding itself on its gentility, Mobile exudes a sort of tea-and-crumpets politeness that few other places in the South still have. But shadows of Jim Crow remain: White society runs things in Mobile, while black families crowd into tight, sagging one-story houses in Prichard. Calvin lived in one of those houses.

Calvin's family called him "Angelo" or "Antelope" or just plain "Lo." He was an outgoing kid who liked to dress up in a baggy jacket and huge pants and parade around the house making his family laugh. Like his cousins, Calvin was athletic and probably dreamed of playing football at Vigor High School, the all-black public school his father and just about everyone else in Prichard had attended. "That's all he loved," says Calvin's younger brother DeWayne Moore. "Basketball and football."

But as he got into his teens, Calvin started having problems. His father had moved to Mississippi, and his mother became addicted to crack. Calvin was spending more and more time out on the streets late at night or driving around with friends. His teenage exuberance soon gave way to fighting and stealing. After he was kicked out of school in the ninth grade for arguing with the principal, Big Mama tried to raise Calvin herself. But when he got tired of her rules, he moved back into his mother's place a few blocks away.

By the time he was 17, Calvin's whole family was scared for him. They had heard he was using coke and breaking into homes. When they confronted him, Calvin denied everything. His mother, Gale Moore, trying to get off crack, sat nervously at home, just knowing that her son was out doing God knows what. "I couldn't sleep," she says. "Every time I heard the police cars, I'd jump." She had good reason to be worried. America is in the midst of a prison boom—with nearly 2 million people incarcerated, there are five times as many inmates today as there were in 1970. And 73 percent of people admitted to prison each year are nonviolent felons like Calvin Moore.

On August 1, 1995, Calvin was arrested. He was charged



ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELIZABETH DE RAMUS

with burglary after breaking into the back window of someone's home. He confessed to committing six other break-ins, and was put in Mobile County Jail to await trial. Though Calvin was only 17, he had an extensive record of assaults and theft, and Judge Braxton Kittrell ordered that he be tried as an adult. The family, hoping this would help Calvin get his head on straight, decided not to post the \$750 bail, according to Tom Tompkins, the lawyer defending Calvin. "At least we knew where he was at night," says Calvin's older sister, Pamela Moore.

When he first got to jail, Calvin was defensive. Though he confessed to seven burglaries to the cops, he'd call his family saying, "I

route available to him, his family, and his attorney—a plea bargain. Instead of the 15-year maximum bid he was facing,

Calvin was sentenced to two-and-a-half years in state prison, and then parole. That same day, he was taken to Kilby—a complex of one-story buildings surrounded by spiny wire and packed with some of the toughest inmates in Alabama. Calvin was enthusiastic about taking advantage of the prison's academic classes and vocational training. "When he got to Kilby," says Calvin's aunt Joyce Davis, "he was jolly."

"I'm gonna go to school, get a G.E.D., take up a trade, and get out and get a job," he told her over the phone soon after he got to Kilby.

said two inmates had been talking about how they were going to grab him in the shower. "They said they're going to rape me, make a girl out of me," Calvin told the guard. At first the guard was skeptical, figuring Calvin was just trying to get out of work duty, but the look on Calvin's face made him take the complaint seriously. "He was shaken," says correctional officer Vanderbilt Huffman. "Really scared."

No one on the prison staff knew for sure whether Calvin—who was much younger than most of the other prisoners—had really been threatened, or if he was just experiencing new-guy paranoia. But just in case, on February 7, Lt. Deborah Jones decided to put Calvin into "protective custody" to make sure he wouldn't be hurt. The only place the prison had avail-

"IN THESE CELL BLOCK UNITS, PRISONERS ARE MEDICATED, BEATEN, OR BOUND INTO SUBMISSION, AND THEY RESPOND BY GETTING WILDER, LOUDER, AND ANGRIER."

didn't do nothing. I was just driving the car. I didn't even know what was happening." But over the next few months, Calvin started to reconsider his life. He spoke to Tompkins about how he planned to do things differently when he got out of prison. "He asked me to get him a Bible," says Tompkins. "This was a salvageable young man."

At his hearing in Mobile on January 3, 1996, Calvin took what seemed like the best

"Don't worry about me. I'm fine." It was the last time anyone in the family heard Calvin sounding like himself.

When Calvin arrived at Kilby, he appeared to be in good mental and physical health. He carried a solid 166 pounds on his 5-foot-7-inch frame, and the interviewer who filled out his psychological intake form wrote that what Calvin needed most—from a mental-health standpoint—was "self-concept enhancement."

But three weeks later, Calvin's family started to get strange phone calls from him. They'd always thought of him as a young man who wasn't afraid of anything. Now he seemed scared. "He just didn't sound right," Pamela says. "It was like he was trying to tell us something but couldn't say it."

"Is there really a God?" he asked his aunt Joyce one night. "I just need to know." She spoke gently to him about Jesus. After a few minutes, he seemed calmed, uh-huuhing her as though everything was okay. Then he said, "I got to go," and abruptly hung up the phone.

At 5 a.m. on February 7, 1996, a month after he'd been incarcerated, Calvin went to see a prison guard. He was trembling. Calvin

able was an isolation cell—a concrete box with a combination toilet/sink and a cement platform with a black rubber mat to sleep on.

According to the American Corrections Association, "protective custody" is one of three acceptable reasons to put someone in solitary. "Administrative segregation" is another—to keep the inmate from hurting himself or others. The third is "disciplinary segregation"—solitary as punishment. But over the past decade, as the prison population has exploded, isolation cells are being used more often as an easy way for prison officials to maintain control. In October 1983, the Marion Federal Penitentiary in Illinois suffered a week of horrifying violence—two guards were stabbed to death, one inmate was murdered, others were attacked. The prison instituted a "lockdown." Every inmate, even those not involved in the riot, was confined to his cell for 23 hours a day. Needless to say, the violence abated. Since then, other prisons have followed Marion's example. And now more and more prisoners are doing time all by themselves. Sometimes the results are devastating.

After he was put in solitary, Calvin lay on the cold floor of his cell for hours. He barely touched the sandwiches or Kool-Aid the guards left on trays at his door. And he didn't respond when they called his name. "He just looked at me," says guard Betty Dotson, "he just stared."

Calvin may have been put in solitary



Kilby Correctional Facility
in Montgomery, Ala.

because he needed protection. But as days went by, medical personnel at the prison found other reasons to keep him there. On February 13, almost a week after Calvin was first placed in isolation, prison psychologist Charles Woodley gave him a cursory examination and assessed him as "mute," "non-responsive," and possibly suicidal. He moved Calvin to the prison's mental-health unit. During his stay there, Calvin walked around his cell naked, masturbated, and lifted up his yellow gown in front of student nurses. Prison psychiatrist William Sanders found Calvin's behavior "disrespectful." He prescribed a shot of the powerful anti-psychotic drug Haldol, and tossed Calvin back into the hole.

While Sanders interpreted Calvin's actions as inappropriate, to medical experts familiar with Calvin's case, his behaviors were signs of psychosis—a severe break with reality characterized by delusions and extreme emotions. "The symptom of public masturbating is often seen in people who are in a state of delirium," says Stuart Grassian, a Harvard psychiatrist.

But according to Robert Verdeyen, director of standards and accreditation for the American Correctional Association, inmates are not placed in segregation simply because they are showing signs of mental illness. "They're a disruptive influence. You put someone [in segregation] who's either a threat to themselves or others in the general population, or someone's going to get hurt."

On February 13, Woodley ordered Calvin "under observation." Woodley never completed a full psychological profile. He never ordered tests of Calvin's vital signs, his blood, or urine to see if there was an organic cause for Calvin's behavior. Woodley didn't call Calvin's family to find out if there had been a history of trouble or to inform them that Calvin wasn't well. The way Woodley saw it, as he explained to lawyers later, he couldn't do a complete assessment of Calvin if Calvin wouldn't talk. He figured he'd just wait and see how Calvin progressed.

Meanwhile, Calvin's behavior was becoming increasingly bizarre. On February 15, eight

days after he'd been put in solitary, a prison staffer tried to shave him. Calvin took a handful of shaving cream and swiped it into his mouth. The same day, a guard watched Calvin wring out his urine-soaked

prison isolation. The sickness, which he calls "Security Housing Unit Syndrome," can include massive free-floating anxiety, hallucinations, self-mutilation, and delusions. "[These inmates] are, on average, the most severely psychotic people I have seen in my



Calvin's father,
Guslin Olsson



boxer shorts into his mouth and drink his own urine.

Since the mid-'80s, Grassian has documented the psychosis that can result from

entire 25 years of psychiatric practice," agrees Terry Kupers, a California psychiatrist who has toured isolation units for Human Rights Watch, a nonprofit group that monitors

"IN PRISON, IF A WHITE GUY GETS INTO A FIGHT THEY'LL SAY HE'S HALLUCINATING AND GET HIM TO A PSYCHIATRIST. IF A BLACK GUY GETS INTO A FIGHT THEY'LL BEAT HIM UP AND THROW HIM INTO A HOLE."

human-rights abuses around the world.

Although solitary confinement may not seem like a logical place to put someone who's been diagnosed as psychotic, it's something that happens at an alarming rate in prisons across America. Kupers, whose latest work, *Prison Madness: The Mental Health Crisis Behind Bars and What We Must Do About It* (Jossey-Bass, 1999), estimates that up to one half of inmates in segregation have some kind of psychiatric problem, ranging from long-standing conditions, such as manic depression and schizophrenia, to the type of breakdown that Calvin seems to have suffered. And according to civil- and human-rights advocates such as the American Civil Liberties Union National Prison Project, Human Rights Watch, and the NAACP, the likelihood of getting thrown into solitary for acting "crazy" is much higher if you also happen to be black.

"In prison, if a white guy gets into a fight they'll say he's hallucinating and get him to a psychiatrist. If a black guy gets into a fight they'll beat him up and throw him into a hole," says Kupers.

Although Alabama state officials refused to comment on Calvin's case or reveal the number of black men in their isolation unit, to many advocates the situation at other prisons is clear. Michael Barnhart, a lawyer who represented Michigan's mentally ill prisoners in a successful class-action lawsuit against that state, remembers touring the isolation unit at Jackson State Prison in Michigan. "Out of 212 prisoners, there were an extremely small number of white guys," he says from his office in Detroit. "What do I

think it's about? Racism."

Not everyone agrees with Barnhart's or Kupers's theory. "I don't believe that," says Verdeyen from the

American Correctional Association. "I spent 26 years working in prisons. I just don't believe that the profession of corrections systematically practices racism." Sometimes, says Verdeyen, gang members, who are often black, end up in solitary after fighting with inmates from other gangs. "Rather than looking at the racial composition in segregation, I'd look at why they are in there."

No matter why they are put in isolation, once there, inmates are frequently medicated, beaten, or bound into submission, and they often respond by getting wilder, louder, and angrier, throwing feces out of their cells, urinating at guards, and mutilating themselves. Barnhart recalls that the isolation unit at Jackson State was like Bedlam—rancid with the smell

of feces on the walls and deafeningly loud from the bangs and slams of prisoners. Other inmates in segregation respond as Calvin Moore did—by becoming eerily quiet.



Clockwise from top: Calvin's grandmother Big Mama, his cousin Leonard, niece Shantique, and sister Pamela with her baby Charles



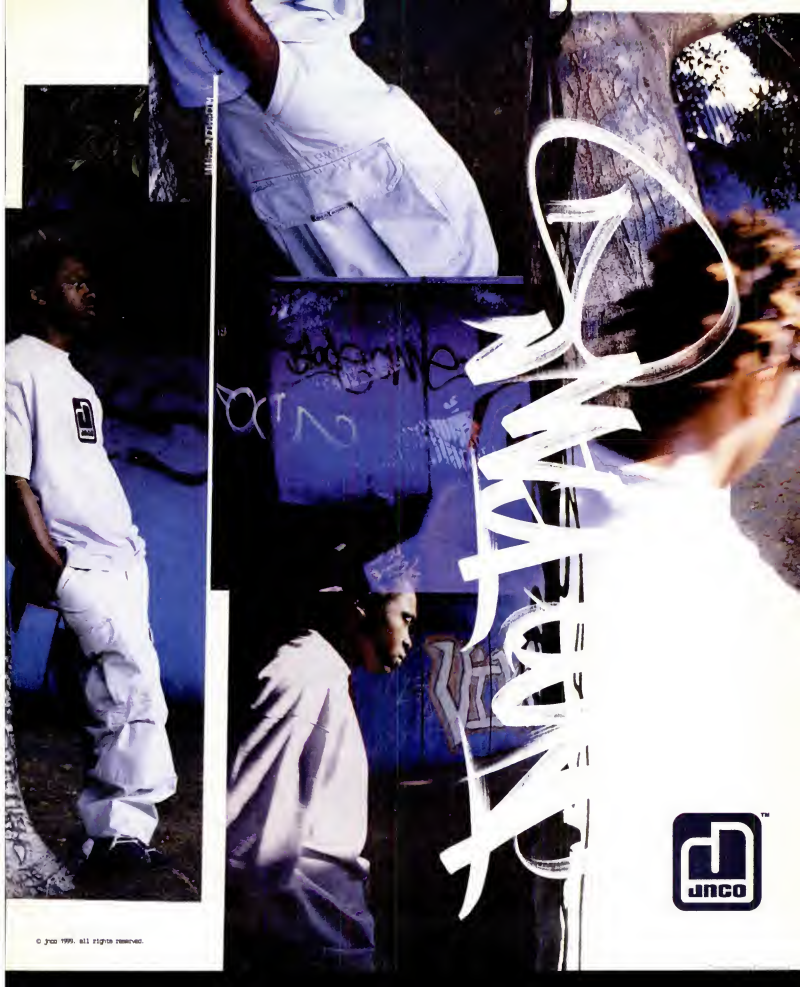
"I'M GONNA GO TO SCHOOL, GET A G.E.D., TAKE UP A TRADE, AND GET OUT AND GET A JOB," HE TOLD HIS AUNT OVER THE PHONE. "DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I'M FINE." IT WAS THE LAST TIME ANYONE IN THE FAMILY HEARD CALVIN SOUNDING LIKE HIMSELF.

From February 14 to February 20, Calvin mostly lay on the floor, either curled up on the concrete or lying facedown with his feet propped up on the commode. One prison guard became alarmed on Tuesday, February 20, when he saw Calvin lying in his own urine. There'd been an acrid odor coming from his cell. Calvin's nose and mouth were caked with mucous, his eyes blank. "We got one that's in bad shape," the guard told his superior. "You need to come and take a look."

The guards put Calvin in a wheelchair and brought him to the nurses' station for a medical evaluation. Phyllis Evans, the director of nursing for Correctional Medical Services, the private company Alabama hired to give medical care to prisoners, knelt down to make eye contact with Calvin.

"Do you want to take a bath?" Evans asked. "Yes," Calvin replied. It was the only word he said.

"He had hygiene problems that needed to be met at that specific time," Nurse Evans said when questioned by Calvin's family's attorney after his death. Evans instructed two male nurses to give Calvin a bath. She did not examine him, did not take his vital signs.



According to her deposition, she never weighed him. If she had, she might have learned that his weight had dropped from 166 to 110. Calvin had lost a third of his body weight, a sign that should have set off alarms for any health-care provider. A blood test would have shown a dangerously high amount of salt in his blood—a symptom of severe dehydration.

At about the same time, Calvin's aunt, grandmother, and sister called the prison to find out if Calvin was okay. "You need to see about him," a family friend who knew a Kilby

ly, and every time they tried to get a needle in they failed. After two hours Calvin was finally taken to the nearest hospital, East Montgomery Medical Center.

At 12:15 p.m., Calvin was pronounced dead. His heart had seized in full cardiac arrest. An autopsy performed by the state of Alabama determined that Calvin's death was from "natural" causes. But Robert Kirschnner, a Chicago pathologist hired to examine Calvin's records by his family's lawyer, wrote in an affidavit that, "The manner of death was homicide due to a consequence of medical

communicate more with each other." Williams also advised that the staff actually touch inmates who were unresponsive to see how they are, instead of just looking at them. (Before being granted a medical license in Alabama in 1994, Williams had lost his license in both Michigan and Oklahoma—in one case for having sexual relations with a female patient, in another for sexually harassing female staff.)

CMS, the for-profit health-care company that hired Williams, issued an official response to questions about Calvin's case saying that they are "...saddened...[but] after a thorough review of the circumstances of his complex case, it is clear the health-care staff provided appropriate care." The Alabama Department of Corrections did not answer repeated requests for an interview about the case and refused to allow a VIBE reporter inside the prison. "Did you come down here with a positive attitude?" Thomas Gilkeson, spokesman for the Department of Corrections asked the reporter. "No, you came down here with a negative attitude."

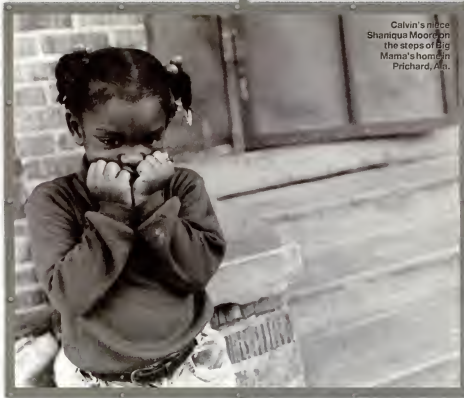
In September 1997, the Moore family, represented by Birmingham lawyer Gayle Gear, filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against CMS, four of its doctors, a psychologist, and three of its nurses alleging that they were negligent, committed malpractice, and inflicted cruel and unusual punishment on Calvin. Last August CMS settled with the family for an undisclosed sum.

While some states—California, Florida, and Michigan among them—have improved prison conditions in response to lawsuits, thousands of cases of inmate abuse are being fought by civil rights activists around the country. "This is an issue that we take very seriously," says Mohamedu F. Jones, an ACLU lawyer who has represented inmates in the New Orleans Parish Prison. "Isolation has become almost like a form of 'treatment' where you lock mentally ill prisoners up and don't look back. It's a gross violation of their human rights," he says. "If this is not cruel and unusual punishment, then that constitutional standard has no meaning." Meanwhile, prison officials still maintain it is the only way to keep order among an increasingly large and unruly prison population.

Big Mama turns her back when her family talks about what happened to Calvin at Kilby. "He was just a little baby child," she says. She stares at a framed photo of him, then puts it down as if each glance makes the sadness in her chest ache even more. She knows that what happened to him could happen to someone else's baby child. Big Mama lifts the photo and takes another look. ■



Calvin's niece Shaniqua Moore on the steps of Big Mama's home in Pritchard, Ala.



inmate had said. "Something's wrong with him." When the family reached a staffer at the prison, they were told that Calvin was fine, but that he was in protective custody so he couldn't talk on the phone. The Moores, who lived three hours from the prison, said they'd be down to see him on Saturday.

They never got the chance. On February 21—a month and a half after Calvin's arrival at Kilby—a guard alerted nurses that Calvin was listless. The medical staff converged on Calvin, trying desperately to get an I.V. line started so they could give him fluids. Calvin drooped as one doctor and nurse after another searched for a vein. But he was so dehydrated his veins had shrunk drastical-

ly and custodial neglect."

According to Kirschnner and other experts, had the prison intervened even hours earlier, Calvin might still be alive. "I don't understand why a guy who has no history of mental illness, who became unresponsive, was peeing on himself, sitting in his urine, looking like crap—why didn't somebody do a physical exam?" asked Jacqueline Feldman, a psychiatrist from the state's medical advisory committee, after reading the prison's internal report on the case.

The report on Calvin's death apparently had little effect. No dramatic changes were made in state prison protocol, except that Gail Williams, the mental health director for Alabama prisons, asked his staff to "com-



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Photographs by Arnaldo Anaya-Lucca. Styling by Emil Wilbekin

V STYLE



112's Q, Slim, Mike, Daron



"If the crowd is not feeling us, I get real with them—to show them I'm not playing," says Kia, 17, the youngest member of Divine. The trio's No. 1 debut single, "Lately" (Pendulum), has already gone gold. "This is what I was born to do," Kia says, "and I'm doin' it for the fans and for me."

Nikki, 18, takes a different approach. "When I get on stage I block everything out and do my thing," she says. "When people see us on stage I want people to feel what we do." Tonia, 19, agrees. "I feel great when I perform because my biggest motivation are my fans. I want to help them escape, have fun, and put a smile on their faces—even if it's for one second."

White strapless silk devore rose-print dress, pink silk chiffon gardenia-print dress, pink silk chiffon gardenia-print shawl, and lavender silk chiffon clover print dress, all by Tuleh.

"I feel like nobody can touch me when I'm on stage—that's my world," says Ginuwine, whose second album, *100% Ginuwine* (550 Music/Epic), is due this month and includes the single "Same Ol' G" from the *Dr. Dolittle* (Atlantic) soundtrack and the new release "What's So Different."

"When I perform it feels like all the work I'm doing is paying off. The only time I really feel happy," says the D.C. native, "is when I'm performing. I feel the love."

Silver silk button-down shirt by Gianfranco FERRE; vintage hat Face & Body: The Ultimate Men's After Shave All-Day Moisturizer by Kiehl's; astringent by Sea Breeze; fragrance Bulgari pour Homme by Bulgari. SEE THE DETAILS



RAGS TO RICHES

Seven years ago, four guys from Hollis, Queens were hawking homemade hats on street corners. Today the men behind FUBU are running a \$350 million clothing empire. Meet the new Kings from Queens.
By Michel Marriott

It's all in the name



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARC BAPTISTE



Opposite page (clockwise from top left): FUBU's J. Alexander Martin, Keith Perrin, and Carl Brown. This page: frontman Daymond John

Smack in the middle of prime Manhattan business real estate, where captains of commerce command vast empires, lies yet another den of enterprise. Everything in these richly paneled offices on the 66th floor of the Empire State Building radiates success—from the fresh-cut flowers in a crystal vase by the receptionist's desk to the original Keith Haring print on the wall. This is home base to the four original founders of FUBU, one of the most distinctive fashion lines to spring out of what some call "urban" America in years. Daymond John, J. Alexander Martin, Carl Brown, and Keith Perrin—all millionaires and all under 30 years old—come to work dressed from head to foot in their own designs and talk business around a vintage pool table in the conference room. When they hang, it's with big dogs like Sean "Puffy" Combs and Russell Simmons, and when they go home it's to big, big houses in the burbs. Martin's crib is so large that it boasts a full-size basketball court in the basement.

"Some nights," says John, 29, "when you're driving in your fuckin' Benz at two o'clock in the morning, with all your jewelry on, you say to yourself, Oh, shit! Or you look at your house and it's a house you've only seen in videos, and you go, Oh, shit, this is all mine!"

But John, whose thick tattooed arms and compact frame make him look like Aaron Neville's long-lost baby brother, says he and his partners haven't changed *that* much. "We still go to the same clubs," he says. "We still drink the same liquor."

"And," booms Perrin, 29, "we still walk to McDonald's!"

The tale of the four young men from Hollis, Queens who turned the concept "For Us by Us" into a multimillion-dollar clothing company has all the drama of a movie of the week: a tough neighborhood, a mother's unwavering love, drug dealing, and then redemption through sweat, smarts, and honest enterprise. "I remember when we were still butt-poor," says John. "It wasn't until we started the company that I

didn't have something crooked going on."

In seven years, John, FUBU's chief executive officer and de facto spokesman, has gone from slinging crack on the deceptively placid streets of Queens to introducing Janet Jackson to FUBU's 1999 spring line. FUBU sportswear is sold in more than 5,000 stores around the world—from Brooklyn to Berlin. In TV and print ads, L.L. Cool J peddles the company's wares, and celebrities from Nas to Montel Williams rock FUBU gear—on and off stage.

As a result of all the consumer heat, FUBU's sales this year are projected to soar to more than \$350 million. And the line that was once just a selection of T-shirts has expanded to include everything to from \$15 socks to \$800 leather bubble jackets. "I just bought a FUBU robe for, like, a buck fifteen," says Wu-Tang Clan's Cappadonna. "Full-length and it's red, with FUBU all around the belt. It's hot. I had Tommy Hilfiger before, but it knocks Hilfiger out the box."

FUBU's growing cachet isn't lost on the men behind the clothes. Leaving their offices on a wintry afternoon, the four FUBU brothers (as they like to call themselves) become embroiled in an impromptu business meeting in the elevator, when an assistant trots in just before the doors slam shut. As the car speeds to the ground floor, the assistant quizzes the

little sideline—selling crack.

"Were we hardcore drug dealers?" John asks. "Not necessarily. But it was always something that was a pastime." For John there were run-ins with police, gun charges, arrests, and short stints behind bars. But when older drug dealers in the neighborhood, role models of a sort, started getting killed or going to jail, John and his clique started to reconsider their future. One of the things that really put John over the top was the tearful scene when his mother, Margo, first saw her baby in handcuffs after an arrest on a gun charge. "I didn't want to do this to her," he says.

But John was still determined to turn a sweet profit. In the spring of 1992, John, then 24, hatched another get-rich-quick scheme: to make and sell tie-top hats. With Brown, his next-door neighbor since childhood, egging him on, John pulled out his mother's sewing machine and got to work. "It was just a straight stitch," John remembers. "I *knew* I could do it." Three weeks later, on Good Friday, John and Brown stood outside a shopping mall in Queens and sold 80 of the hats. At \$10 a pop, they raked in \$800 in about four hours. "We were like, Wow," John recalls.

With that first marketplace clout, FUBU's foundation was laid. The hats were plain, red or black and without the bubble-lettered logo that would become

the company's trademark. But they had sold to the same audience that would one day shower FUBU with revenue. The buyers were kids like themselves who'd grown up on rap and had a lust for "urbanwear"—clothes elegantly designed in bold colors, oversized cuts, and eye-catching graphics. From the tie-tops in 1992 to the new FUBU toddler line, it's hip hop for the body, and in the past that kind of gear had only been available in inner-city outlets. But unlike their predecessors, Karl Kani and Cross Colours, FUBU has forged inroads into the cash-rich hinterlands of middle America and attract the attention—dollar-by-dollar—of white suburbia. "They blew out of the box," says Russell Simmons, founder and chairman of Rush Communications and the force behind Phat Farm clothing company. "Those guys are the groundbreakers."

FUBU's success is based on a simple rule: Although John is undoubtedly the group's leader, nothing makes it from computer-generated design to store shelf without getting voted on by everyone first. "We do a majority-rule thing," explains Perrin, his FUBU baseball cap turned to the side. "It's, like, four of us, and we all have different needs, different wants, different desires. I'm a Gucci fan, a Prada fan, like that. And Desmond is more back in the day. J has always been a GQ dresser. [But when it comes to what

"I REMEMBER WHEN WE WERE STILL BUTT-POOR," SAYS JOHN. "IT WASN'T UNTIL I STARTED THE COMPANY THAT I DIDN'T HAVE SOMETHING CROOKED GOING ON."

men on which celebs are hot enough to merit FUBU's latest creations *before* they hit store shelves. She rattles off a list of names: Chris Tucker? Blackstreet? The guys scratch their chins and ask each other only half-jokingly, Are those niggas hot enough?

Life for the brothers wasn't always so heady. Growing up in Hollis, they watched hip hop pioneers Salt-N-Pepa, L.L., Run-DM.C., and Russell Simmons move up and, often, out of the working-class neighborhood. But John and his crew were always long on wants and short on loot—and even shorter on a real plan. For John, the only child of a divorced single mother, the lack of funds led him to cook up quick-cash schemes. "He used to come up with all kinds of ideas," says Brown, who has known John since they were both 4 years old. Like the hour-long trips they would take to Manhattan's Chinatown to buy fireworks to resell to neighborhood kids (for the appropriate markup) on the Fourth of July.

By the time he was 17, John was holding down a 9-to-5 waitering gig at Red Lobster and trying desperately not to be, as he puts it, "a working fucking stiff for the rest of my life." To pull in extra cash, he and his running partner Perrin, then 16, had a

Life ain't nothing but a \$350 million-a-year party for (from left) Perrin, Martin, and Brown



PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS

Not everyone can flow like a rapper, but with the right gear you sure can look like one. Many MCs have started their own clothing labels, featuring everything from decal Ts to showy silk to Busta-inspired man-dresses. Here are some performers clothing the world. *Chris Houghton*

Naughty Gear

Naughty By Nature

Old schoolers Naughty were the first rappers to offer promotional clothing and accessories like bed sheets, boxes, and watches through catalogs that came with their 1993 album *19 Naughty III* (Tommy Boy). "We were influenced by the way Spike Lee did his merchandising," says Naughty's Winnie Brown. In 1994 Naughty opened the first hip-hop artist-owned store in their hometown Newark, N.J. Now Naughty Gear is sold in Germany, Japan, and Iceland in addition to the United States, with sales topping \$5 million last year. New for '99 is the Naughty Girl women's line, complete with lingerie. "We're going right after Victoria's Secret," says Brown.

Wu-Wear

Wu-Tang Clan

Wu-Wear's Staten Island store opened in 1995 and now boasts a collection of leather outer-wear, jeans, and accessories. Overseen by Clan member and CEO Ol' "Power" Grant, the moderately priced Wu-Wear collection is estimated to gross \$20 million this year. With stores

in Virginia, Atlanta, Cali, and Philly, you can also nab the clothes in almost any cool mall store.

Bushi

Busta Rhymes

Since 1992, Busta Rhymes has been talking about making clothes with his friend, designer Rachid Boo. They finally struck with a line of T's and hats offered through a catalog enclosed in Busta's 1997 *When Disastrous Strikes* (Elektra). The line is basic hip-hop gear, but that doesn't mean you can't get yourself some of the more, uh, eccentric stuff: Busta sports in his videos and wears to event shows. Core for one of those bright red matador numbers?

Sean John

Puffy Daddy

Puffy dodged advice from everyone from Tommy Hilfiger to Russell Simmons before launching his 32-piece "urban high fashion" line this winter. Sean John (Combs's first and middle names) features men's, women's, and children's clothes in fabrics from cotton to cashmere. The line is projected to rake in between \$16 million to \$20 million this year. "We

have a team of designers, and Puffy works with them," says Jeffrey Tweedy, executive VP of Sean John.

No Limit Clothing

Master P

First talking P dolls, now camouflage gear for the world: Based in Los Angeles, No Limit has been marketing promotional T's since 1991. This spring an official line of P-inspired gear for the whole fam is in the works. No Limit spokespeople are tight-lipped about the line except to say it will include a "bright orange Hawaiian shirt."

FJ-560

Fat Joe

Taking Fat Joe's initials and the street number of his now-closed retail clothing store on Melrose Avenue in the Bronx, FJ-560 was launched fall of 1997. Featuring sweaters, leather jackets, and jeans big enough to fit his boy Pun (that's a 62-inch waistline, baby). FJ-560 is available in Dr. Jay's stores all over the country. So far the line has netted over \$2 million in sales. "I don't wanna be classified as a hip-hop or urban

line," says Brim Fuentes, FJ-560 cofounder/owner. "We are a clothing line that makes designs. We're not following no bandwagon."

Infamous

Mobb Deep

New York High School of Art and Design dropout Prodigy has been designing clothes, including sweats and rubber raincoats, since 1980 in Mobb's Harlem store (which they opened in summer 1998). "The traffic in the store is nothing, but the amount of call orders is a lot," says Prodigy.

Phat Farm

Russell Simmons

The granddaddy of hip-hop businessmen, Russell Simmons started the first line of hip-hop gear in 1992. In 1998, Phat Farm has raked in an estimated \$20 million in revenues. Phat Farm jeans, jackets, and T-shirts cover the bodies of everyone from Marlon Wayans to Rico-look-A-Fella/Def Jam superstar Jay-Z. This spring, look out for Baby Phat Jewelry and a new line of shoes called Vilsa.

Additional reporting by Shaheem Reid

we sell, three of us gotta like it."

Buoyed by their success with the homemade hats, John, Perrin, and Brown decided to branch into T-shirts. It was 1992, shortly after the uprising in Los Angeles, and one of the first shirts bore a pro-Rodney King image. While they were selling the T-shirts on the streets, Martin, an old friend of the three, returned to Queens after having served in Operation Desert Storm.

With one year at New York's Fashion Institute of Technology under his belt, Martin, who serves as John's right-hand man in the day-to-day operation of the company, was the only one of the group who actually had any training in fashion design. He suggested they be more ambitious and start making red shirts, with buttons and everything. "Let's get some patterns, get some fabric," he urged them. "He made it sound like a piece of cake," remembers John. Soon the group, who had all moved into John's mother's home to save money, were producing a line of sweatshirts, T-shirts, and athletic jerseys to sell at cultural fairs and in mom-and-pop stores.

By 1993, as their business savvy was coming into focus, the FUBU philosophy suddenly materialized. One afternoon John was reading *The New York Times* when he noticed an article about Timberland, the makers of rugged outdoor wear popular among black and Hispanic youth. The piece quoted a Timberland executive saying that a hip-hop clientele was not who they were after; they preferred their primary consumers to be "honest working people." "We saw the article and we said, Yo, blacks are supporting all these companies, but [the companies are] all going, 'No, I'm making it for tennis players. I'm making it for mountain climbers,'" John remembers. "When is somebody going to make something by us, for us?"

From that thought came FUBU's name and promise. (For a while the fledgling company had adopted the acronym JUFU until the guys decided it didn't have the right ring.)

In recent years, the "For Us by Us" concept has broadened to include just about anyone who embraces the company's philosophy. On FUBU's website (www.fubu.com), the brothers have modified the meaning of their name: "You might say that our real name should be FUBU FUBU: For Us by Us. For U by Us. Either way the result is the same. FUBU means pride and style." Still, many FUBU fans maintain that it's the company's pro-black inflection that draws them to the line. "My main thing about liking it is it's owned by brothers," says rapper Kurupt.

But according to John, just because a customer is black doesn't mean he or she gets it. If a black Wall Streeter who never hung out in black neighborhoods decided to wear FUBU to demonstrate how cool he is, John says, "I don't want him wearing it. Stay with who you are."

By 1993 the company had a look, a name, and a philosophy; all they needed was a spokesperson. The crew didn't have to look far. Three blocks from John lived L.L., whose double-platinum *Mama Said Knock You Out* (Def Jam) had won a Grammy the year before. "He wasn't our boy boy," John explains. "But we was cool." John and his friends would go on tour with L.L. and do odd jobs like hauling equipment or standing on stage and throwing souvenirs to the fans.

The strategy was simple: Get L.L. (who had just signed with NBC to star in *In the House*) to wear FUBU in an advertisement, and they'd have a money-in-the-bank endorsement. For three hours one summer day,

John and his crew cramped out by the limo parked in front of L.'s house. When the MC finally appeared, John says, "We were like, Niggas, you gonna take this picture," and pulled out a point-and-shoot camera. The amateur snapshot featuring L.L. in a FUBU T-shirt was snapped into a \$7,000 half-page color ad for *The Source*.

Three years later, in 1996, L.L. inked a deal with FUBU to become its official spokesperson, and although no one will say how much L.L. is being compensated for his efforts, the deal has paid off well for FUBU. Last year, in one of the most subversive moves in advertising, L.L. slipped in a free plug for the company while he was filming his famous freestyling national TV commercial for the Gap. Wearing a FUBU hat, L.L. concluded his 30-second Easy Fit Jeans rap by saying the Gap is "for us by us on the low"—a direct and intentional reference to FUBU. "With the Gap thing I wanted to get them out there," says L.L. about the taping. "I just threw it in like a soldier going all the way for them." Word at the time was that Gap executives weren't too happy about the stealth commercial. Gap spokespeople were unavailable for comment.

While L.L. was slipping mentions of FUBU's credo into other companies' ads, some people were beginning to wonder whether other companies were slipping into FUBU. Rumors have spread among consumers, especially black ones, that FUBU has been bought out by a non-black company, and that the four cofounders are little more than brown-skinned figure heads.

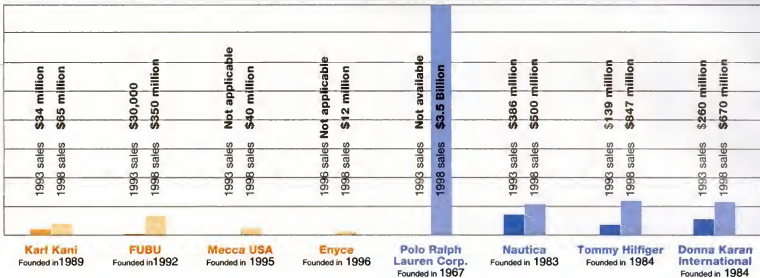
It's an assertion that John flatly denies, even though Samsung, the 10th-largest corporation in the world, best known for manufacturing home electronics, distributes FUBU. According to John, the

GET MONEY

Once the domain of young upstarts like Cross Colours and Karl Kani, "urban" sportswear has become a lucrative venture that many mainstream clothiers are cashing in on. With annual sales topping \$750 million, designers from 7th Avenue to Crooklyn are throwing their hats—and their oversized jeans—into the hip hop fashion ring. It's dog-eat-dog in the scramble for those extra large apparel bucks.

Elena Romero

URBAN LABELS
MAINSTREAM LABELS
* GRAPH NOT TO SCALE



The FUBU four move fashion forward



Korea-based company approached FUBU after a trade show in 1995, and signed on as an investor and distributor of the line a year later. Still, the founders of FUBU maintain they have complete creative control; Samsung is only in charge of shipping the clothes to the stores. "We own this motherfucker, and I make all the calls in this motherfucker," John insists. "People say to us, 'I hear you got Jews and Koreans in your business,'" he says in a mock whisper. "[But] you gotta go through this kind of shit to have your situation distributed. It's business." A Samsung spokesperson failed to return repeated calls from VIBE.

Shortly after the L.L. magazine ad ran, consumer and retail buzz predictably started to grow. In August 1994, FUBU's founders traveled to Las Vegas for an international fashion buyers' and sellers' show. In four days, FUBU took in \$300,000 worth of orders for retail chains like Dr. Jay's and Up Against the Wall. Elated, John came back to New York, mortgaged his house for \$100,000, and put an ad in the fashion trade magazine: MILLION DOLLARS IN ORDERS, NEED MANUFACTURERS. Contracting a few small companies to make their clothes, FUBU began to build a reputation as a real power player in the fashion game.

In a dimly lit corner of Houlihan's, a nothing-fancy chain restaurant on the ground floor of the Empire State Building, Brown reflects what that he and his partners have achieved. "We got basically what any young black would want, what any young person would want," he says. Nice houses, a lucrative business, fans who send hundreds of laudatory e-mails, and "in a minute," John adds, a corporate jet with the FUBU logo emblazoned on the tail.

And there's something else success has brought the men behind FUBU. Recently a white advertising exec mistook John for just some company "waterboy" doing errands at the office. The exec smugly commented that "they must be paying you well," in reference to John's shiny gold jewelry. Insulted, John showed the executive the door. "I didn't have nothing to say to him after that," he snorts. Running an empire *does* have its privileges. □



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Nas is...knowledge, wisdom,
and understanding



barcarach tables. *Illmatic* had gone gold, slowly and quietly. *It Was Written*? Twice platinum.

But Nas's die-hard fans didn't love the second album because, in all honesty, it wasn't as tight as it should have been. If *Illmatic* was a virgin—innocent, curious, hot, then *It Was Written* was a whore—overexposed, easy, more flash than substance. These are the breaks. At any rate, the legend grows, right? Zillions of CDs are sold. A rapper is paid. Old friends become new foes. Neighborhood fades to enemyhood. The night comes quicker. Rapper raps about these experiences on third album (the tentatively titled *I Am...the Autobiography*). Rapper promises to bring back the realism, the foundation that was on his premier disc. Rapper fares okay on screen in poorly plotted flick (Hype Williams's 1998 *Belly*). Rapper reps clothing line with a name boosted from one of his aliases (Willie Escobar) and plans to open a chain of sports hotspots called Escobar's "because things get boring. People need something to do." Rapper also cowrites Will "the Fresh Prince" Smith's 1998 Grammy-winning single, "Gettin' Jiggy With It." Not bad for a high school dropout from Queens, son.

How do you feel about *The Firm* experience with Foxy Brown and AZ?

I feel like it was a trendsetter. We be doin' trendsetter shit, or we do inspirational shit for other companies to do, other groups to do.

And you toured to support it, right?

Yeah, the Puff Daddy [No Way Out] tour. I seen how Puff was just on some Michael Jackson shit—bigger than the world. It was the hip hop tour of the '90s. I had to be on that shit, man.

Tell me about that new joint, "We Will Survive." On it, you warmly address B.I.G., Tupac, and the speculation on who's lyrically the best...

I'm just voicing something that stuck in my head a while ago that I just wanted to get off my chest. I felt, like, on some rhyming shit, me and B.I.G. ripped this shit up—along with a lot of other niggas. But me and B.I.G. was ripping this shit up since Snoop and them came through. Me and B.I.G. came to crush this shit, leading the path for a new style from New York to come out. Rakim, Kool G Rap, L.L., KRS—them niggas is the greatest. In the '90s, after that era with the West Coast, we came with the thunder. Boom! I knew [B.I.G.] back before niggas was really gettin' money. Puff comin' out to Queensbridge, bringin' B.I.G. Or me and B.I.G. just kickin' it, me comin' out to BK.

Fallen Comrades

Nasir—plastic cup fulla Hennessy in one hand, tight pro-rolled blunt in the other—is at ease within the Hit Factory's padded walls (The prodigy himself once rhymed, "Nas's raps should be locked in a [padded!?!] cell..."). Now on bass break, he's sitting in a leather chair in a television lounge, stroking his well-maintained waves, surrounded by five of his boys—close associates, neighborhood hard-asses—goodfellas on the payroll who love and respect their benefactor, their man.

Stories—insane, criminal, ironic, ridiculous—float through the thick weed haze. These tales, tall or not, are the beef cubes that all good hip hop is made of. Nas listens. And he adds on. "You can write whatever you want, just no names," the rapper says

Nas is...never asleep



"I'm not a killer, I'm not a murderer, I'm not a gangster. This is about writing—it's about art to me. I make gangster music—I'm not a gangster."

calmly. So I listen too. *He killed his baby's mother's father—the seed's grandfather! Stupid motherfucker!... Back in the day, you would get pussy and everything in the number spot... How the fuck is the number man gonna hit the number?*

"QB," Nas, 25, declares with the slow, cool funk of a man in his early 70s, "the fuckin' project walls can speak everything."

So B.I.G. came out to the Bridge once?

He was at [nearby] Power Play studios. I came to get him; we went back to QB and chilled with my

niggas for a little while—just watchin' the project nightlife go on. Another time, I went to his crib—we were just smokin'. We talked about how this game is shaky. You've gotta get in, knock the bank off, get all the money, and get out. *Comfortably.*

So is that the plan—get in, get what you can, and get out?

From the gate. Definitely. Come in and try to get yours. I'll see a New York rapper walkin' around—a legend-lookin' fucked up in the pocket. Niggas was like, nah—we ain't goin' for that.

Now that *It Was Written* is twice platinum, how have

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things changed for you in the old neighborhood?

You got [jealous] niggas. But that just gives people something to talk about. At the end of the day, you put together in your mind how hard it was for you to get there. [My success] is just showin' that if I can do it, you can do it. I'm lookin' forward to niggas being like, Yo, this nigga came from *right here*. I want them to know that he came from this block, he got there, and he's still *here*. Not literally here, but in the heart here.

You have your hip hop purists who feel that Illmatic is a dead-on classic. And that It Was Written was on some, well...other shit.

Illmatic is just the basic math—straight hip hop. But [that style] got boring to me after we had a whole bunch of fuckin' rappers comin' out with that type of flow, those type of words—it just became common to do. The fans now are calling for *Illmatic* again—they didn't really understand the places I was comin' from on [*Written*]. My man Stretch [from Live Squad], who I used to hang with everyday, was killed. He produced a record on my joint ("Take It in Blood"). It was a whole deep thing fuckin' with that album.

continued on page 116

Nas is...serious

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Nas is...forever young, like Rod Stewart

There was so much I wanted to say, and I don't really think I got it out, but...songs like "I Gave You Power" came and slapped niggas up, like, *boom!* Come on, where's the art? A lot of niggas, it'll take 'em like five years to catch up.

"Shootouts" (ripe with a swirling narrative involving an Irish cop, a mega-bitted bottle snitch, and hustlers ready to bust a 1-8-7 move) was my favorite song on It Was Written. Was that story line based on fact—or was it just bizarro fiction?

I kinda broke it up. The beginning be the real story, then I threw some other shit in there to spark your imagination. Luckily I don't have to be on the street every day. God bless the ones that's still out on the street. I ain't gotta be where I gotta worry about cops, or killin' a nigga or gettin' killed as a nigga just thuggin' it. But I'm a writer, and I come from that, so I write shit like that. You gotta take it back to "Memory Lane," when I was talkin' 'bout [famed 1980s New York drug kingpins] Supreme Team, Alpo—niggas wasn't puttin' that in rhymes. I said, "Fuck rap! It's real / Watch the Herb stand still / Never talkin' to

snakes 'cuz the words a man killed / True in the game/as long as blood is blue in my veins..." I was talkin' about the streets, straight up and down.

Well, you're the gentleman who told the world that the rap game was similar to the crack game. How old were you when you first fully understood the crack game?

[Takes a deep breath] About 14.

Break it down for me: How is the corporate rap game similar to the crack game?

You got motherfuckers around that want what you got, that want to stop you from eating. You got your people that are bloodsuckers who come around. You got the fiend-type motherfuckers walkin' around—whether they artists, executives, groupie-ass motherfuckers, or whatever they is. There's trickery, deceit...but, you know, I'm past that. I wouldn't call it a crack game no more. Everybody knows it's a crack game now. So the shit is about to become something else.

What do you think it's gonna become?

This shit is gonna be the fuckin' dollar game [laughs]. This is the dollar game, for real.

What is Nas supposed to say, anyway? He came up in the '80s. Drug loot was like Monopoly money. Mothers and motherfuckers lined up for the free cheese that Ronald (not McDonald) said was ours. Forty creamy acres worth. Nas wants dollars, not cents. Before he permanently locked himself into the vocal chamber, I exchanged goodbye pounds with Mr. Jones. But I taxed a few extra choice moments on my way out. He was working a cut tentatively called "Niggas With Cash." And although I couldn't see the iced-down phantom through the glassed-off blackness, I could hear his roar. Nas saw me but marched on through; his process was now exposed. I stayed there for 20 minutes, watching a ruffian-dialected diamond in the rough. I came away from that session feeling like I had learned one of life's great mysteries. It wouldn't be fair to completely blow up his spot, but I will say this: His style is free. And even if Nas doesn't create *illmatic* part deux, he's still one of the dopest docudrama, verbal-performance novelists of generation hip hop X. It ain't hard to tell. ■

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THE *Sty*list

JAMAICA FASHION

SPRING BREAK

Testing Donna Karan's new DKNY Active and Jeans collections, VIBE's junior editors get their groove back in Jamaica. Irie! Photographs by Piotr Sikora. Styling by Emil Wilbekin

When we heard that Donna Karan was launching her new DKNY Active and Jeans lines, we decided to put the gear to the ultimate test: a spring break vacation with real-life critics—our junior editors. Armed with three big suitcases full of stuff, Katina Lee (Face/Fashion Coordinator), Brandon Kavulla (Designer), Minya Oh

(Music Lifestyle Editor), Duane Pyous (Associate Photo Editor), and Shani Saxon (Associate Music Editor) broke out to Negri for some fun in the sun.

Since our editors are all exacting professionals, we felt they'd truly test out these new outfits by wearing them on a furlough filled with afternoons on the beach, water

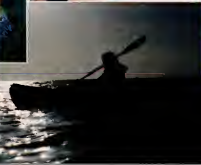
sports, hiking, dancing, and investigating the splendor of Jamaica. "It was an adventure," says Oh, 25. "You see everyone on the daily grind in the office, but this trip was like being on a field trip—and not just talking about magazine covers and new albums. We got totally into the Jamaican thing and the reggae."

White cotton tank top with logo by DKNY Jeans Women's, khaki cotton slip-away pants, sport sandals, and sunglasses, all by DKNY Active Women's



The first thing on the agenda was to catch some rays. From peddling on water bicycles to paddling in sea kayaks to taking a boat ride to a deserted island, the crew's DKNY swimsuits, neoprene scuba gear, and aqua socks weathered the salt water, sand, and fruity drinks. "With a lot of the clothes and the shoes we could just jump into the water, so that was cool," says Oh. Pyous, 24, agrees. "Those nylon cargo shorts are versatile and light. You could swim in them, they have lots of pockets, and they fold up into a pouch—that's hot!"

The action and adventure weren't limited to the beach, though. The next day, faced in nylon convertible cargo pants, breezy cotton dresses, and



the *Stylist*

DESIGNER FASHION



From left:
Kavulla, Saxton,
Pyous, Lee, Oh



easy cotton T-shirts, the VIBE crew headed for the hills to see downtown Negri, get into some cliff-diving, and hike the lush forests. "My favorite part was going down the back roads—that was the real Jamaica," says Kavulla, 26.

At night, dressed in loose knit sweaters, linen drawstring pants, comfy cotton dresses, and laser-cut shift dresses, everyone ate grilled lobster and drank plenty of margaritas, then

headed to the late-night dancehall party to get their groove on! "This dress is so comfortable," says Saxon, 25. "It feels like I'm wearing nothing."

Whether touring the island on motorcycles, hunting for souvenirs, or just lounging on the beach, our crew agreed that there was something for everybody in these two new collections—and that everything was comfortable. "I like the fact that the clothes were

adaptable and can go from day to evening," says Lee, 25, a born Jamaican. "You can wear a dress to the beach and then out at night—depending on how you freak it."

At the end of the trip, everyone was rested, tanned, and sad about returning to New York City. But they'd finished their assignment, and the verdict was in. Says Oh, "DKNY is urban fashion." SEE THE DETAILS *Emil Wilbekin*



From left: White cotton and Lycra short-sleeve zip-neck crew, black Lycra swimsuit, sport sandals, and white nylon swimsuit, all by DKNY Active Women's; euro cotton twill cropped pant by DKNY Jeans Women's; aqua socks, black Lycra swimsuit, navy poplin zip-away skirt, and sport sandals, all by DKNY Active Women's
Face & Body: Sun tanning gel in SPF 15 by AVON; lip moisturizer by Blistex



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Navy nylon swimming trunks with Velcro crotch by Dolce & Gabbana, \$95



Beige cotton crewneck with Velcro shoulder strap by Aris Ceruti 1881, \$415

Black three-layer Gortex pant by Timberland, \$298



Yellow nylon rain jacket by Tommy Hilfger, \$68



White cotton Velcro shirt by Levi's SilverTab Women's, \$34



Beige GIV sneaker by Puma, \$60



Tahiti slide by Nautica, \$30



G-Shock G-Lide watch by Casio, \$110



Black nylon Velcro waist pouch with leg string by Helmut Lang, \$155



sneak

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scoop

food for fierce fashionistas

"I've been into music longer than fashion," says designer Maurice Malone, 34, who used to spin records in his native Detroit. "I used my own parties to help grow my fashion. Now, I use my fashion to grow my music." Malone is talking about his new label, Hostile Takeover Recordings. This spring, the label will debut its first group, Bullets and Gun Smoke (a.k.a. BAGS), a Harlem rap quartet.

"As a [music] consumer, I was tired of getting gyped. It seemed like it was better to buy a single than the album," Malone says. So he teamed up with producers Mark Kitchen and Wu-Elements' Goldfinger to "help bring back the value that you used to get in music in the '70s and '80s." "I've modeled the label after Motown, Death Row—in its heyday—Bad Boy, and Def Jam," he says.

Malone isn't alone. Andy Hilfger, Tommy Hilfger's vice president of public relations for Tommy Jeans, just launched his own record label, AHR, in partnership with Quincy Jones's Qwest Records (Jones is the founder of VIBE). "When I came to work at Tommy," says Andy, "I started dressing all the musicians—hip hop and rock 'n' roll." Andy Hilfger will introduce his first artist, Michael Fredo, this summer.

"Music and fashion are very important because consumers see their idols in the clothing, and musicians always need to look good," says Hilfger, 36, who's also a guitarist.

Even FUBU is getting into the act with plans to launch their new label. Hey, if music-biz types can become designers, why can't designers become record execs? Russell Simmons enjoys the huge success of Def Jam Recordings and Phat Farm. Malone says, "Music needs fashion and fashion needs music."

Emil Wilbekin



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[illegible]

Subject: *Tanya Ali*, 20, Aqueduct, L.I.C., New York City, is a former dancer at the Fresh Prince of Bel-Air for six years (1990-96). Now the Harvard Freshman (undecided on her major) is promoting her debut album, *Kiss the Sky* (RCA/SONY), which features the girl's (Ali's) number "Dyemashin" and "Boy You Knock Me Out," featuring a cameo by her former TV brother Will Smith. This month she appears as a stylish head cheerleader in *Unbreakable*. (Columbia TriStar).

Idols: Dianna Ross and Tina Turner
Daily Routine: "I use all grocery store stuff," says Takayama. She washes her face with Neutrogena, uses an alpha hydroxy acid formula to remove dead skin, and follows up with Oil of Olay moisturizer.

Secrets: "On special days, I use masks and an apricot scrub to exfoliate," says the Long Island native.

First Makeup Purchase: "My mom uses Clinique, so when I was in the seventh grade she took me to the counter and bought me the three-step cleansing program, the pale green pressed-powder compact, a light-colored lipstick, and mascara."

Worst hairstyle: "Oh my God! You can see it on syndicated television—it was the long, puffy,

Feathered-bang look. "In junior high Big Disaster: "In junior high

"So I decided to shape my eyebrows myself. I jacked them up and then tried to pencil them in. It was so bad. My mom took a picture so I'd never forget."

Must-Haves: N.A.C pigment powder in Golden Bronze and Silver and Wet 'N' Wild lipsticks and gloss, because all the colors are brown based and go great with the complexion.

Transformers: wrap up by Rafael
pita for the Agency; Bill by Alan
Whyte for Hubert & Co., Manhasset,
N.Y.

Top-A-Bottom: City base compact foundation \$5.15 by Clinique in Blue. **Mocha:** styled by Prestige in Tempo restaurant by Mayagolden in Buck. **Blending board:** by Burt's in Bambi. **lip liner:** by MAC in Creative. **lip color:** by MAC in Lipgloss in Gold. **Ingrance:** by L'Oréal in Easy. **Makeup:** many lightweight stretchy gaudy, NARS product with zip-out hood, cream color, and Lycra and lace sleeves. **Hood:** with detachable hood, both by K-188 by Dany. **See THE DETAILS**

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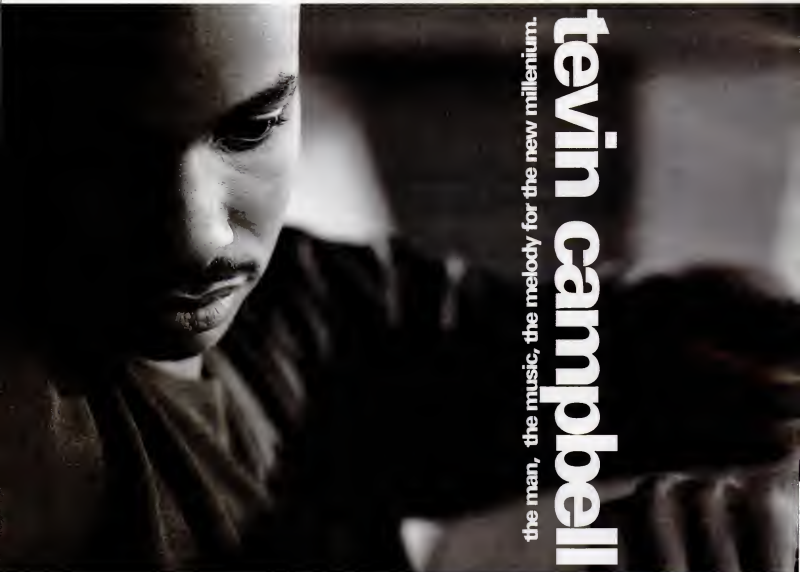
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This season almost every TV show featuring an African-American cast is either canceled or at the bottom of the ratings. Who pulled the plug on Black TV? By Jeff Salamon

POWER

ILLUSTRATION BY JOSH GOSFIELD FOR VIBE

The late '90s have not proved kind for the black sitcom. On the major networks, programs featuring African-Americans do about as well as a Chuck D solo joint. In the fall '98 TV lineup, four new black shows hit the small screen, but by December, only one was still on the air—ABC's *The Hughleys*.

It wasn't supposed to be this way. NBC's *The Cosby Show*, the No. 1 show from 1985 to 1989, proved that comedies featuring black performers could pull in not just African-Americans, but the millions of white viewers a show needs to jack up its ratings. Knowing a good thing when viewers saw it, NBC added more bourgeois-black folk fare: The Top 5 *A Different World* spun off in '87, and the Top 20 *The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* moved in three years later.

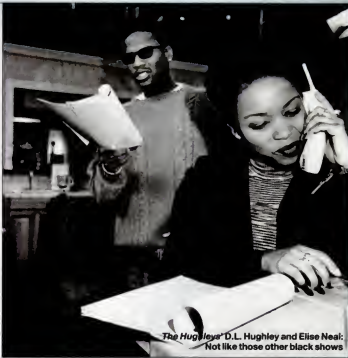
NBC's success didn't go unnoticed by the programmers at the fledgling Fox network. Fox first got down with the frenetic *In Living Color* in 1990. Soon afterward, *Roc* (1991–94), *Martin* (1992–97), *The Sinbad Show* (1993–94), and *Living Single* (1993–97) joined the party, giving Fox an instant black audience. Suddenly, prime time was filled

known as "the blackout," Fox—citing poor ratings rather than race—summarily dismissed *Roc*, *Sinbad*, *In Living Color*, and *South Central* (1994), all at once. But also blame producers who churned out subpar fare like UPN's *Homeboys in Outer Space* (1996–97) in an attempt to pander to the same audience that Fox had just dumped.

"There's a group of people who came along and created too many lowbrow shows that featured African-Americans, and I think that devalued black comedy," says executive producer Yvette Lee Bowser from her office on the WB lot, where she oversees her latest creation, the integrated sitcom *For Your Love*.

On her desk is a nameplate that reads BOOTY-SHAKIN' SUGAR MAMA, a keepsake from her days as the creator of *Living Single*, the semi-feminist sitcom that set off Queen Latifah's acting career. "We have to look at ourselves—what have we done? If you have eight shows with homeboys flying around in a wagon in space and one *Living Single*, at some point it's going to take its toll."

And the toll has been costly. When



The Hughleys D.L. Hughley and Elise Neal: Not like those other black shows

WHEN A WHITE SITCOM FLOPS, NETWORKS BLAME IT ON THE WRITING OR THE TIME SLOT. BUT WHEN A BLACK SITCOM TANKS, EVERYONE ASSUMES THAT BLACK SHOWS SIMPLY DON'T SELL.

with shows on which people argued about things such as the politics of hair weaves, black fraternities, or "high-yellow" snobbery.

"I think [programs like *A Different World* and *Living Single*] were unusual in that they dealt with intra-racial tensions," says Kristal Brent Zook, a VIBE contributor and author of the forthcoming book *Color by Fox: The Fox Network and the Revolution in Black Television* (Oxford University Press). "These debates weren't always understandable to people outside of the African-American community, and that was unprecedented for network television."

But half a decade later, the market has taken a U-turn. Of the 11 black sitcoms left on the air, only *Cosby* and *The Hughleys* are hits. The other nine—shows like *Malcolm & Eddie*, *The Wayans Bros.*, and *Sister, Sister*—are on the wane as fifth and sixth networks, the WB and UPN, and they are scraping the bottom of the Nielsen barrel.

So who pulled the plug on Black TV? Point one finger at Fox, which in 1994 decided to "broaden" (read: whiten) its core (black) audience. In a move popularly



shows featuring black characters are lousy, white viewers stay away in droves (there are already plenty of fluffy white shows for them to watch), exacerbating the segregation that already exists among TV audiences.

Last February, TN Media Inc., a New York-based media research company, released a study showing that white and black households had radically different viewing habits. The white Top 10 and the black Top 10 didn't share a single show,

and the No. 1 show among black viewers, Fox's *Between Brothers*—about a sibling odd couple, featuring black sitcom vets Kadeem Hardison and Dondre Whitfield—ranked 177 among whites. So it came as no surprise when, last spring, UPN announced its intention to stop "narrowcasting" and reach for a "middle-American" audience.

Denying that the network was abandoning black audiences, UPN president Dean Valentine reassured *Jet* magazine readers last January that, "The new UPN will have some of the old UPN buried within it." Likewise, one Hollywood source says the WB's Thursday-night black lineup (*The Wayans Bros.*, *The Jamie Foxx Show*, and *The Steve Harvey Show*) "is in danger" as the network finds success with more broad-based teen fare such as *Felicity*, *Dawson's Creek*, and *Buffy*, the *Vampire Slayer*. (The WB did not answer requests for comment.)

Sitting on a stool by a fake bar on *The Hughleys'* L.A. set, producer/star D.L. Hughley, 34, speaks with the confidence of an actor whose show, comfortably ensconced in the zos in the Nielsens, isn't threatened. Hughley, who based the pro-

gram on his own experiences moving from a black working-class neighborhood to a white suburb, gives an example of how *The Hughleys* wraps a *Roc*-style race consciousness in a *Cosby*-style cuddliness. In "Class Clown" (an episode in which one of the Hughley children is doing poorly in school), I tell my son that he represents 33 million black people—an experience blacks have had universally that white people would never know about. Moments like that are one of the real strengths of the show.

Still, it seems an unfair burden for *The Hughleys* to represent 33 million black people. When a white sitcom flops, network suits blame it on the writing or the time slot; they never come to the conclusion that white shows are passé. But when a black sitcom tanks, everyone assumes it's because black shows simply don't sell.

"To me, *The Hughleys* is the black show that we all hope works," says Rose Catherine Pinkney, VP of comedy development at Paramount Network. "Because if it doesn't, things are only going to get worse." Judging by the current TV lineup, it seems like things already have. □

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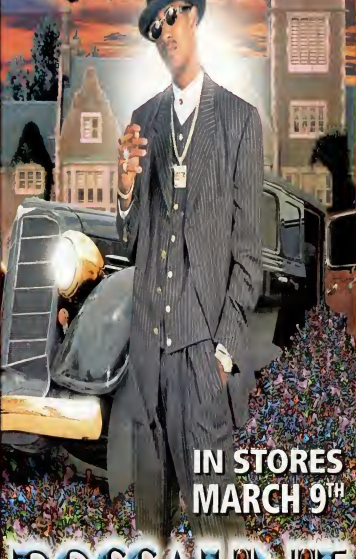


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movie previews

8MM (COLUMBIA)

Nicolas Cage and Joaquin Phoenix star in this sicko trip into the underworld of snuff pornography. Directed by Joel Schumacher from a script by Andrew Kevin Walker (who wrote Hollywood's last great sicko crime flick, *Seven*), *8mm* aims to drag audiences through the muck of illegal sex and violence. Expect Cage's morally ambivalent private dick to go through the same horrific wringer Brad Pitt's endured in *Seven*, only without Morgan Freeman to hold his hand.



movie previews

200 CIGARETTES (PARAMOUNT)

Courtney Love, Ben Affleck, Dave Chappelle, and Christina Ricci star in yet another ode to the '80s. Set on New Year's Eve 1981, *Cigarettes* follows a group of teens and twentysomethings looking for love and, like, meaning during the dawn of the Reagan era. *Cigarettes* will try to sell *Wedding Singer*-ish nostalgia, banking on the attractions of a memory-lane soundtrack and its nubile cast of late-'90s Hollywood hotties partying down before the age of AIDS.



movie review

THE CORRUPTORS (NEW LINE)



Hong Kong movie legend Chow Yun-Fat (*The Replacement Killers*) teaches Mark Wahlberg how to mow down gangsters Hong Kong-style in *The Corruptors*, a gritty tale of loyalty

movie review

RUSHMORE (TOUCHSTONE)

Rushmore is a wry comedy about a snooty, slightly surreal all-boys prep school and Max Fischer (newcomer Jason Schwartzman). Its loser king—imagine *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*, only smarter. When a pretty young teacher arrives on campus, Max goes crush-crazy and sets about winning her favor. He pulls some weirdly touching stunts, including conning rich alumn Bill Murray into building her a multimillion-dollar aquarium on the school's baseball diamond. Murray does a brilliantly understated turn as the bored, alcoholic businessman who takes

THE 24 HOUR WOMAN (THE SHOOTING GALLERY)

In this comedy about careers, motherhood, and the cost of having both, Rosie Perez stars as a TV producer whose life turns upside down when news of her pregnancy is announced on the air, launching an intrusive nine-month blow-by-blow which quickly spirals out of control. *Woman* must do well—as long as its target audience can find babysitters.



THE DEEP END OF THE OCEAN (COLUMBIA)

Based on Jacquelyn Mitchard's best-selling novel of the same name, *Ocean* tells the tear-inducing story of parents (Treat Williams and Michelle Pfeiffer) who discover that their long-missing son has been living just a few towns away for years. Whoopi Goldberg reportedly does an unexpected turn as the woman with the secret to the kidnapping. Despite promises of high drama, *Ocean* will probably wade in the deep end of the chick-flick pool.



and betrayal set in New York City's Chinatown. Echoing the East-West pairing of last summer's comedic blockbuster *Rush Hour* (but with a darker sensibility), *Corruptors* presents Chow as a shady cop saddled with a do-gooder white boy who has "yellow fever" (Wahlberg). Packed with gun battles and car chases, *Corruptors* overcomes (but just barely) the depressingly familiar stereotypes of inscrutable Asian customs—thanks in large part to the effortlessly cool Chow. Able to crack jokes and empty a clip with fluid élan, Chow keeps *The Corruptors* from sinking to *Year of the Dragon* lows.

an interest in Max, while cowriter and director Wes Anderson shows impressive skill in keeping this film on a fine, off-kilter line. *Rushmore* is sharp enough to poke fun at its cast of high school misfits yet wise enough to love them.



REEL TO REAL

News from the Hollywood

by Stephen Rebello



Will and Lauryl

Will Lauryl Hill and Will Smith go where Whitney Houston and Denzel Washington didn't? Insiders are buzzing about the Hill-Smith dream team that could revive Warner Bros.' long-stalled *A Star Is Born* remake, in which Houston and Washington had been expected to star before they demonstrated zero screen chemistry in *The Preacher's Wife* (Buena Vista, 1996). The lovely Hill's last starring role was as a talented teen opposite Whoopi Goldberg in *Sister Act 2* (Touchstone, 1993). *A Star Is Born*—which starred Judy Garland in 1954 and Barbra Streisand in 1976—is the story of a showbiz ingenue whose career soars while her lover's plummets. But in this installment of the Hollywood classic, Hill would play the loser. How '90s.

Looks like the O.J. Simpson saga may have given Shakespeare's *Othello* a whole new currency. Word is Mekhi Phifer (*I Still Know What You Did Last Summer*, *Soul Food*) may soon star as Othello in *O*, a modern adaptation of the 17th-century tragedy. Phifer has reportedly agreed to play a love-struck college sports star whose obsessive paranoia and jealousy drive him to murder his yet-to-be-cast blond bio. The indie flick is scheduled to start shooting early this summer.

Those Who Know predict major things for October Films' *Boriqua's* *Bond*, a Latin drama generating *Boys in the Hood*-type buzz. Scheduled for a summer release, *Bond* is a salsa/merengue/hip-hop-inflected story of a young painter (salsa sensation Frankie Negrón) who uses his art as a ticket out of the barrio. Written and directed by 20-year-old new-comer Val Lik, the film is cast with kids Lik found around the South Bronx, and features cameos by Method Man and Big Punisher.

Star Wars' electrifying, two-minute trailer caused near-panic in theaters last November. So what's going to happen when *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace* hits screens May 21? Rumors are spinning out of control; one has it that theater owners expect the first month's crowds to be so huge that the space epic will screen 24 hours a day. Speaking of rumors, the action-packed role of Mace Windu, played by Samuel L. Jackson, may not grab much movie time in *Episode 1*, but Windu could well endure in the continuing saga.

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TALKING HEADS

Look who's exercising their freedom of voice. *By Rochell Thomas*



Don't front. You *know* you saw *The Rugrats Movie* (Paramount, 1998) and thought you heard Busta Rhymes's voice coming from the animated tots' Reptar n.d.e. No, it wasn't an audio hallucination. That was Mr. Woo-Hah. And that was Jennifer Lopez speaking for pesky ant Azteca in last fall's *Antz* (DreamWorks). But they aren't the only stars talking for 'toons. More celebs are making easy bucks (at least \$650 for a four-hour workday) to sound off in animated TV series and flicks. Peep these four animated acts.



1 Eddie Murphy is *Delirious* in *The PJs*, his wickedly funny, extremely un-PC "foamation" creation. Animated by the California Raisins folks, *PJs* slices into the life of Thurgood Stubbs (voiced by Murphy) a toilet-fixin', crackhead-dissin' project superintendent. Think: *Good Times'* Bookman meets *The Simpsons'* Homer and you've almost got Thurgood. To get closer, put a "forty" in his hand and *Wheel of Fortune* on the tube. *The PJs* airs weekly on Fox.

2 Even dedicated Red Hot Chili Peppers fans will be hard-pressed to connect Chili bassist Flea's stubbly face to the voice of Donnie, the dimwitted jungle child of Nickelodeon's *The Wild Thornberrys* (Tues. & Thurs., 8 p.m.). "People are always surprised to hear Flea is doing a cartoon," says Barbara Wright, the show's casting director. "Maybe his band was wild, but he is a nice guy."

3 Where, oh where has Bill Bellamy gone? The former MTV VJ and star of *How to Be a Player* (PolyGram, 1997) currently works on the down-low as the puppet star of *Cousin Skeeter*, a sitcom about an unruly MC who moves in with his square cousin *Fresh Prince of Bel-Air* hybrid airs Tues. & Thurs. at 8:30 p.m.

4 Check this: You heard soulful actress/singer Cree Summer years before you saw her on NBC's *A Different World* (1987-1993). The voice behind more than 14 cartoon characters, this vocal contortionist first sounded off as Penny on *Inspector Gadget* (currently in syndication). Today Summer shines as three-year-old Susie Carmichael on cable's No. 1 children's show, *Rugrats*, and its \$73 million-plus-a-week grossing movie companion. Next stop? Possibly her own show—*The Carmichaels* spin off in 2000. *Rugrats* aims to tie a week on Nickelodeon.



Andre Braugher bou

TNT'S COURTSIDE DRAMA

B-ballers play for more than locker-room banter on TNT's true-story-based drama *Passing Glory*. Headed by coexecutive producers Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Quincy Jones, *Glory* stars Emmy winner Andre Braugher (in his first TV role since leaving NBC's *Homicide: Life on the Street*), as a young priest who arranges a controversial scrimmage between two undefeated Catholic school basketball squads in segregated New Orleans of 1965. (One team is black, the other's white.) "I attended Catholic schools until college," says Braugher, 36, best known as *Homicide*'s Det. Frank Pomborino, "I'm quite familiar with the Pomborington. This game, in [the school administrator's] words, was a catalyst to integrate the Catholic league." That's quite a prodigious goal to weigh on a teenager's free-throw shot. Catch Braugher, costars Ruby Dee and Damien Wayne, and the final score on February 21 at 8 p.m. (ET/PT). **B+**

CHANNEL SURFER **VIBO** helps you bask in the blue glow

MTV's cure for cabin fever? Try a dry-mated Ice Cube and Ice-T battling for their frosty pseudonyms in the second-season opener of *Celebrity Deathmatch*, February 4 at 10 p.m. (ET/PT). Quarrelling couples also fight for prizes on *The Blame Game*, a new show scheduled to debut February 5 at 11 p.m. (ET/PT). *Daria*, our favorite high school outcast (*Liaia, liaia*), starts her third angst-filled season on February 17. Will she drop the nerdy glasses for contact lenses? Find out at 10 p.m. (ET/PT). • "We pity the fool" who doesn't peep Mr. T: *The El True Hollywood Story* on February 7 at 8 p.m. (ET/PT). • When a working mother (Erin Sherry Stringfield) discovers an Asian immigrant smuggling ring in NBC's (tentatively titled) thriller *Trade Off*, Christopher Reid, a.k.a. Kid of Kid 'N Play, helps save the day as Marjano Sparks, a smooth-talking, booty-battling "funcky" private eye,

"When [Stringfield] needs some fingerprints to break into a place or get clandestine work done, I'm the guy she comes to," says the House Party alumnus, who may soon host a syndicated dance show. "My character's basically the only laugh in a pretty serious piece." Tune in *House Party* Wed. 24 at 9 p.m. (ET/PT). Last year *Erykah Badu* took home the Grammy for best female R&B performer. Who will take home the trophy this year—Kelly Price? Faith? Marv J. Blize? Find out *House Party* 24 at 8 p.m. on CBS. R.T.



Statistical Scooby Snacks: Age of Scooby-Doo, America's hungriest Great Dane: 30. In dog years: 210. Number of mysteries solved by Scooby and friends since the cartoon debuted on CBS in 1969: nearly 300. Number of years between the *Murder, Inc.* gang's last escapade and their new Scooby-Doo on Zombie Island animated flick (February 20 at 8 p.m. on the Cartoon Network):

Lil 'Nique & D J Jus

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tech

DADDY'S HOUSE

BY MINYA OH AND HYUN KIM

Sean "Puffy" Combs may close a multimillion-dollar deal at lunch, produce his next No. 1 hit after dinner, and discover his next platinum artist in between, but at the end of the day he wants to kick back and relax at home, just like you do. But this music mogul chills in typical Bad Boy style, in the basement den of his five-story Upper East Side, Manhattan town house. Puff had his own personal movie theater built after he visited the home of the president of Interscope Records. "I was at Jimmy Iovine's house in Malibu and he had [a home theater]," says Puff. "I was like, Damn, when I get some paper, I'ma get one." Who needs to go to Loews when you have your own 100-inch movie screen (Knoll Systems) and customized theater seats (CinemaChair) complete with optional heat and massage units. So what else does the biggest entertainer in hip hop do when it's time to entertain himself? See for yourself.



THEATER PROPS

Puff's perfectionism doesn't stop in the studio—just look at his home theater. The walls are decorated with posters of classic films (*Casablanca*, *Cleopatra Jones*, and *The Godfather*). And what's a theater without popcorn? Puff has an authentic Gold Medal popcorn machine complete with etched glass and antique finish.



BALLER-VISION

FUJITSU PLASMAVISION 42EP \$10,999

Don't mistake this for some kind of postmodern painting—Puff has his TV hanging on his living room wall in a customized wood frame because it's only a couple of inches thick! And with a 160-degree viewing angle, guests can enjoy stunning picture quality on its 42-inch-wide screen from anywhere in the room.



SOLE CONTROLLER

CRESTRON SMARTOUCH STS CONTROL SYSTEM,
\$2,500—\$3,900

This futuristic Etch A Sketch-like gadget is the universal remote control for all of Puff's household toys. By simply touching the menu shown on the LCD display, he can control his TVs, VCRs, stereos, lights, and even fireplaces—no matter where he is in the crib.



PICK FLICKS

Puff's taste in movies proves to be as diverse as his musical collaboration choices. His collection of DVDs and videocassettes ranges from kidvids (*Beauty and the Beast*) to documentaries (*When We Were Kings*) to classics (*Scarface*, *Cooley High*).

PUFF-N-STUFF



Evidence of the children in this Daddy's life is strewn throughout the house. There are bottles and strollers for his baby boy, Christopher. Elder son, Justin, and girlfriend Kim Porter's son Quincy have a classic Radio Flyer wagon to play with.



1



2



3



4

FLAVA IN YA' EAR

PIONEER ELITE SYSTEM

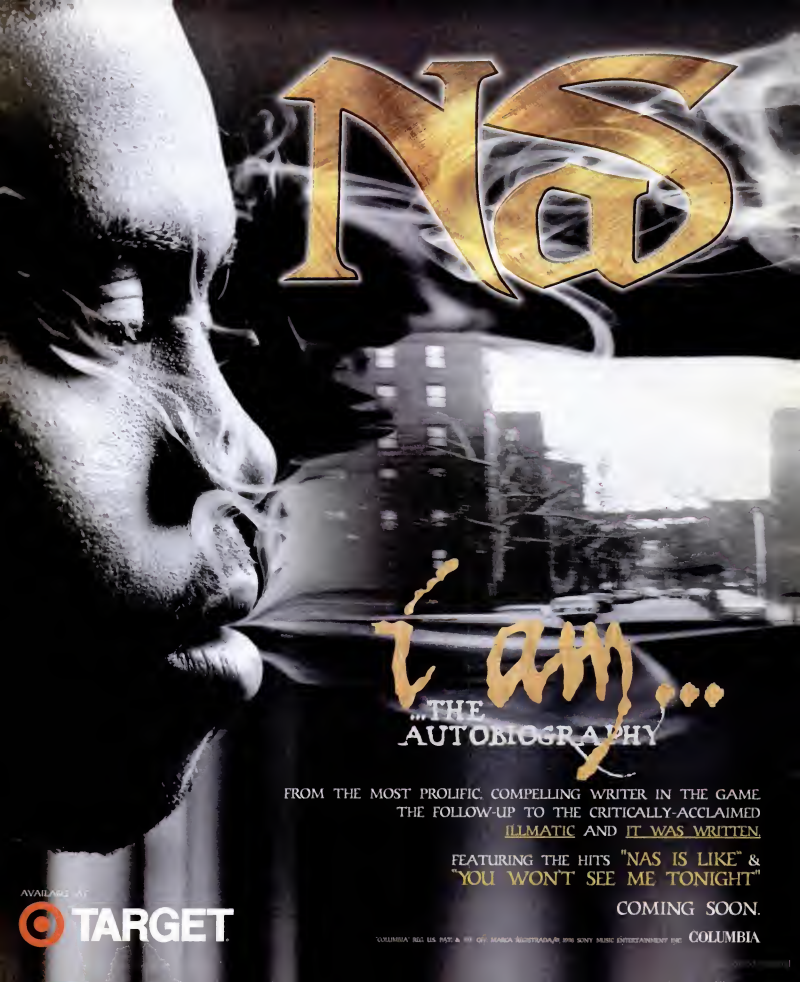
We know you've heard him on the radio—and at the club, on the TV, and even at bar mitzvahs. So it's only right that P. Diddy's house would be equipped with a top-of-the-line Pioneer entertainment system on each floor of his house. In addition to an Elite CT-07D dual-cassette deck player (No. 2; retails for \$550) and an Elite VSX-09TX THX-certified Dolby digital A/V receiver (No. 3; \$1,750), Puff also has an Elite DVL-91 DVD/LD/CD player (No. 4; \$1,800) and a 100-disc CD changer (No. 1; Elite PD-F07, \$500) that lets him play the entire Bad Boy catalog and more without lifting a finger. All of this, combined with a 100-watts-per-channel amplifier (M-72 2/4, \$1,000), means that Puff can pump his music loud enough to let all of his Park Avenue neighbors know there's a Bad Boy on the block. What CDs does Puff use to test out audio equipment: Ice Cube's *Amerikkha's Most Wanted*, and Marvin Gaye's *Let's Get It On*. What type of sound does Puff look for in his stereo: "Crispness, quality, and clarity. I like mid-range with a whole lot of bass and bottom."



The average Joe may decorate his place with flea-market knickknacks, but a celebrity like Puffy dresses up his home with priceless memorabilia such as award trophies (MTV, Blockbuster, Grammy) and autographed prints from the legendary photographer Gordon Parks Jr.



For more information on the products you see here, turn to page 180.



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REVOLUTIONS

BLACKSTREET 'FINALLY'

INTERSCOPE

BY AMY LINDEN

Even with 16 years worth of hits on his résumé, it's hard to gum up just what the Teddy Riley sound is.

Which is sorta what makes Riley cool. As Blackstreet's terrific third disc, *Finally*, proves, the best thing you can say (and there are many good things to say) about Riley as a producer is that you can't see a Teddy Riley track coming. He makes hits, but he doesn't make cheap ones.

Riley's uniqueness is noteworthy at a time when what is loosely dubbed "rhythm



From left: Eric Williams, Teddy Riley, Terrell Phillips, Chauncey Hannibal

and blues" (a.k.a. "black music," a.k.a. the only music that's sellin' these days) has never been more popular or, for that matter, more predictable. Go figure. It seems that as soon as some fresh-faced production whiz kid carves a personal style out of an overcrowded landscape, the innovative groove that caught the public's attention quickly becomes a "trademark"—a sure-shot move that marks every page of his or her playbook. A tired redundancy that reduces any up-and-coming beat maker from *trendsetter* to *transporter* in the time it takes to say "che-ching."

Not that Riley's past records don't share connective references and similarities. After two albums with Guy (1988's *Guy* and 1990's *The Future*), two with Blackstreet (1994's *Blackstreet* and 1996's *Another Level*), as well as numerous gun-for-hire smashes with the likes of Wreckx-N-Effect, Michael Jackson, Keith Sweat, and Bobby Brown, Riley has certainly developed a few trademark moves of his own. Everyone's familiar, for example, with that under-the-breath "Yup-yup," that's since been hijacked by Pufty. But a definitive Teddy Riley sound? Sheeillt, the last time you could flat-out hand the Harlem meestro a neat catchphrase, it was called "new jack swing"—and said phrase went from describing a sound to defining an era.

BLACKSTREET IS A LEVELHEADED, RESOUNDINGLY SKILLED GROUP THAT RELIES ON MATERIAL AND TALENT RATHER THAN IMAGING AND EXCESS.

Riley reaches back into his varied bag of tricks on *Finally*, a much more rhythmic collection than the four-times-platinum *Another Level*. Listen to the new disc's 15 cuts, and you're sure to soak up some of that slurred, southern-fried stagger-studda-step that Blackstreet elevated to absolute majesty on the 1996 Grammy winner *No Diggity*. (Remember the way the synths and the drums played cat and mouse with each other, and then bit ya on the hook and the chorus?) Blackstreet's glorious, testosterone vocals are still there too—for solo runs or stacked one on top of another. Hell, even the vocoder sounds kinda fly, y'know?

Of all the mega male acts in R&B, Blackstreet have always been the most low-key, the most humble, the ones least likely to pull a grandstanding lovmann stunt (even though group cofounder Chuncey Hennesal is easily lovmann enough to pull it off). Like Riley, who remains a reasonable superstar—one might even declare him *anonymous* in the most complimentary, egoless sense of the word—Blackstreet is a levelheaded, resoundingly skilled group that relies on material and talent rather than imaging and excess.

Finally kicks off with 1999's first great example of sampling used for good instead of expediency. "Can You Feel It?" marries Blackstreet's voices to the thundering hook from the Jacksons' 1980 song of the same name. But the pyrotechnic sample only enhances what is already a jam in the making. Throughout the album, in fact, jams are the order of day. Jams with big heart and rich flowing melodies, maybe, but jams—rump shakers to be sure.

From the push-and-pull Puerto Rican juddo of the lead single, "Girlfriend/Boyfriend" (featuring Janet Jackson), to the jungle-meets-bass hip-sway of "Don't Stop," Riley gives Blackstreet forceful, dominant beats and rhythmic patterns to wrap their soulful vocals around. Even when they're crooning the sort of poetry that only sounds good when you're drunk or desperate: "Like the moon / You make my ocean obey," from "On the Floor."

Surprisingly (and disappointingly) enough, our most musical of groove-masters fails to deliver a ballad as lush and soothing as "Don't Leave" (1996) or "Joy" (1994). *Finally*'s emotional tour de force, "Drama," features a miscast Mary J. Blige, and leads into the overwrought "Misery," which does little more than prove that Terrell Phillips, the new guy from North Carolina, can saaaaang.

This time out, it's clear that Blackstreet are aiming less for the heart and more for the haunches. *Finally* does the most damage when the disco beckons. Or maybe the go-go club. It's an album of what my pal calls "stripper music." But of course, this being Blackstreet and Teddy Riley, they tease it just right. The sex dance is smart, soulful, and singular.

REVOLUTIONS
REDEFINING
HYMNAL OH

OH, WORD?

[All information subject to change according to the artist's slightest whim.]

Thankfully, just as some things change (who would have ever predicted a Busta Rhymes/Ozzy Osbourne duet?), some things stay the same. If you're a fan of _____, for example, you'll be relieved to know that the new album from Queensbridge's darkest duo, *Murder Muzik* (Loud), due this April, has all the infamous, ominous goodies that have pushed their past product into classic status. "White Lines" (already a white-label single, in the hands of a lucky few DJs), follows in the volatile footsteps of Mobb favorites like "Shook Ones Pt. II," (1995) and "G.O.D. Pt. III" (1997). Over a twisted heart-murmur bass line that Havoc borrows from the Grandmaster Flash original, Prodigy spits lyrical fire: "I put my lifetime in between the paper's lines / Tryin' to speak the dunn language / You hooked on Mobb-phonics / Infamous-ponics." On tracks such as "Thug Music," "Infamous 2000," and "Where Your Heart At?" (an R.I.P. ode to lost loved ones), the pair add honorary Mobb member Rapper Noyd and the Infamous Mobb to the mix. They even branch out with a QB version of bounce on the stellar "Street Raised Me" and "M.O.B.B." With forthcoming albums from Prodigy, the Infamous Mobb, and two Mobb R&B singers—Chinky and China—rest assured, murder music is alive and well.

One of hip hop's most established brand names, _____, has switched labels—from Tommy Boy to Arista. But they haven't lost their crowd-rousing sound. On the upcoming album (due this month) *19NaughtyNine: Nature's Fury*, Treach, Vinnie, and Kay Gee return with strong hip hop for fans of all ages, zip codes, and colors. The first single, "Live or Die," shows Naughty's flexibility. Kay Gee lays out a pimp track and lets Vinnie, Treach, and special No Limit guests Mystikal and Silk the Shocker ho-stroll all over it. The underground cut, "Dirt All by My Lonely," shows that the trio can make more than just party anthems. And "Same for Me" gives love back to their fans and friends, "cause," as Treach says, "they woulda done the same for me." *19NaughtyNine* also features appearances from Big Pun, new rapper Mag, and Kay Gee's supergroup Next.

Everyone is wondering what to expect from the as-yet-untitled _____ album, set for a June release on Sony. Label head Tommy Mottola's pet project is reportedly being executive-produced by Mark C. Rooney, who has produced songs for Mariah Carey and Mary J. Blige. So far, Mottola and Rooney have enlisted the diverse production talents of Pufty and his Himmen, Trackmasters, Tony Moran (Gloria Estefan's *Gloria*), Digga (Cam'ron's *Con-fessions of Fire*), and others. Lopez might surprise folks, as her tracks run the gamut of musical genres. One dance number ripples with Latin flavor, while others find the actress singing over happy rap rhythms. She even tries to belt out the theme from the movie *Malogony* ("Do You Know Where You're Going To?" Motown, 1975). It'll be interesting to see which songs make the cut for Lopez's grand debut.

Love 'em like a cloud over the projects: Prodigy and Havoc, Mobb Deep





BOOM SHOTS

You can go to Aquarius Records in Kingston or Super Power Records in Flatbush, Brooklyn. Drop in at Dub Vendor in London or patronize Osaka's Lion Music Den. Wherever you go to shop for reggae 45s, it's pretty much the same routine.

There will be an excruciatingly cool, noncommunicative would-be DJ behind the counter spinning fast and furious. On the back wall, a complex system of cubbyholes displays hundreds more new selections. Your (impossible) mission, should you choose to accept it, is to listen to all these little slabs of vinyl before closing time, purchase the good ones, and get out of the store without going bankrupt.

If you love reggae but you're not willing to conduct a musical safari every two weeks or so, how do you keep up with the never-ending bonanza of "new serial"? Just pick up a compilation CD. But which one? They all claim to be essential or definitive or crucial or whatever. What's the real deal? Here's a quick rundown with no space wasted on the wack:

Reggae Platinum + Renaissance Mix Tape Volume 1 (J&D)

One dangerous double disc. X1 CD contains a solid 14-song grab bag (Bee-Dee, Sean Paul, Vegas, etc.). But X2 CD is the real murderation: a digiti-crisp megamix—replete with dub-plate specials by the likes of Spragga and Zebra—courtesy of the consistently innovative JA sound system Renaissance Disco.



Strictly the Best Vol. 21 & 22 (VP)

VP Records delivers the usual double-barrel blast of DJ's (21) and singers (22). Most cuts here are familiar hits, with a few unexpected gems. You expect jumbo tunes like Luciano's "Uterior Motive" and Beanie Man's "Gospel Time," but when you get Culture featuring Tony Rebel singing "Hungry People," your belly is sure to be full.

Hit List (Platinum Distribution)

An impressive anthology constructed with an emphasis on tough niddims. The Mad People Gang is all over this disc: five pieces of the "Bruk Out" niddim (Bounty Killer, Baby Cham, Spragga Benz, Cobra, and Chico & Goofy), three cuts on the mighty "Showtime" (including both Mr. Easy's sublime "Rain Again" and Rayvon & Red Fox's "Bashment Party"). *Hit List* wins the prize for maximum mileage in one CD.

Revolutionary Sounds: The Essential Collection of Classic Roots Reggae 1973-1981 (Shanachie)

For the rootically inclined, this hefty four-CD box set is an absolute must. Not a greatest hits collection, but something greater: anthologies of tastefully chosen, hard-to-find treasures. The selections are long and strong, ranging from the rebel music of *Revolutionary Sounds* (Spear, Uhuru, Jacob "Killer" Miller, etc.) to the three-part harmonies of *The Power of the Trinity* (Diamonds, Itals, Heptones, etc.) to the timeless Rasta hymns of *By the Rivers of Babylon* to the all-star dub attack of *In the Red Zone*. Bona fide foundation sounds.

FIVE PICKS MORE REGGAE FLAVOR TO CHECK FOR

Hearings of the Nixia (Kariang)

Total Togetherness Vol. 1 (VP)

Greensleeves Reggae Sampler 16 (Greensleeves)

Essential Dancehall Records (Music Club)

Easy Star Vol. 1 (Easy Star)



THE ROOTS 'THINGS FALL APART' MCA

On their fourth effort, *Things Fall Apart*, the Roots find themselves on the cusp of a commercial breakthrough. Like De La Soul and A Tribe Called Quest, the Roots have always stood for innovation in hip hop, both sonically and lyrically. Borrowing the title of Chinua Achebe's literary masterpiece, *Things* continues the evolution the Roots have undergone since their independently released debut, *Organix* (Motive/MCA, 1993).

To paraphrase Chuck D, from the Roots' last album, *illadelph half/life* (DGC, 1996), the Roots are an enigma, perhaps even to themselves. They certainly remain one to critics, who have tried to pigeonhole the group ever since they released *Organix* and their critically acclaimed sophomore album, *Do You Want More!!!!!!* (Geffen, 1995). Stuck with the "alternative" label, the Roots were then falsely accused of restructuring their sound on *illadelph* to gain a harder, more authentically "hip hop" sound.

Fusing the free-flowing live instrumentation of their first two albums with the methodical, yet still revolutionary, in-house production and engineering techniques of *illadelph*, the Roots have finally perfected their sound. This synthesis, coupled with the vocal gymnastics of Black Thought and Malik B, makes for one of the most complete albums of the decade. The plush beats on "The Next Movement" and stripped-down acoustics on "Dynamite" exemplify that wholeness. "Dynamite," which features the background harmonies of next-school soul group Jazzyfateastes, captures the Roots at their most nuanced. Using structure, chord changes, and unorthodox time signatures, the Roots take techniques associated with hard bop-era jazz and put them in a hip hop context. The seemingly simple guitar licks on "Dynamite" provide another example of the group's creativity. Black Thought, using his voice as an instrument, stutters his way up the scales, while the guitar accents his vocal riffs.

Even when they take a more traditional approach, the Roots manage to raise the standards for hip hop. The aptly named "Adrenaline" features a sparse piano loop that spurs the wordsmiths to new heights. Thought, Malik B, Dice Raw, and newcomer Beans each outshine the other in a battle of lyrical one-upmanship. But it's the tracks' subtleties that separate the group from their peers. Rahzel channels live turntablism through his transcendent beat-boxing, while Thought and his cohorts display stunning verbal calisthenics.

The Roots have reconfigured the pyramid again, placing themselves at the top. Although some things in hip hop continue to fall apart, the Roots pick up the pieces and construct a new order.

Mahmoud Abdul-Latef

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ALSO LOOK FOR . . .



TEVIN CAMPBELL 'TEVIN CAMPBELL' (QWEST/WARNER BROS.)



Tevin Campbell is all grown-up. No more cutie-pie ditties à la "Round and Round" (Qwest/Warner Bros., 1991) for this onetime Quincy Jones protégé. He's all man now, with all the primal urges that go with manhood. That's the overriding message of his slick fourth collection, meticulously designed to stave off post-child star oblivion.

All commercial bets are hedged, as evidenced by the participation of such omnipresent figures as Wyclef Jean, Stevie J., and Faith Evans (who cowrote and harmonizes on the romantic "The Only One for Me"). The good news is that Campbell has evolved into an assured (and yes, remarkably mature) stylist, capable of rising above the familiar formulas of his producers and giving their material a much-needed fresh spin. He's particularly strong on Jean's "Never Again," transforming an otherwise forgettable song into a jaunty funk romp pleasantly reminiscent of '70s-era Stevie Wonder.

Perhaps most appealing about *Tevin Campbell* is the artist's ability to quietly breathe volumes of emotional subtext into a lyric, as he does on the delicate acoustic ballad "Since I Lost You." At a time when many of his R&B colleagues equate soul with shriek, Campbell's subtle phrasing and intimate demeanor are ultimately more inviting and will render his recordings far more durable.

Larry Flick

BUCKSHOT, 5 FT., AND EVIL DEE 'WAR ZONE'

DUCKDOWN/PRIORITY

It's been six long years since the artists formerly known as Black Moon—Buckshot, 5 Ft., and Evil Dee—hit with their classic debut, *Enta Da Stage* (Nervous, 1993). Hip hop may have changed a bit since then, but with the release of *War Zone*, their much-anticipated reunion album, it's obvious that these guys can still get wreck, son.

In 1993 Black Moon epitomized the rugged Timbs-and-hoodies attitude. Backed by Evil Dee's unrelenting tracks, MCs Buckshot (then Shorty) and 5 Ft. tore through *Enta* with a ferocious sting. Not much has changed this time around—and their sound still works. *War Zone* uses slower tempos, and Buck and 5 Ft. have lost their stick-up-kid mentalities. They're still hardcore, but their perspectives on life have changed (chillin' with herb is mostly what they talk about these days).

Producers Beatminerz (Evil Dee, Baby Paul, and Mr. Walt) have once again displayed their brilliance, creating a perfect mix of dark, bass line-driven tracks ("All Y'all Niggaz") and melodic loops ("The WhirlWind"). Although Buck's lyrics sometimes lack the intensity and rawness that made him so incredible in the past, the album's general excellence is undiminished. The group pick up pretty much where they left off; we can only hope that their next effort comes sooner.

Noah Callahan-Bever



Buckshot, Evil Dee, 5 Ft.

SHANICE 'SHANICE' LAFACE

Although she's released two solo albums—1987's *Discovery* (A&M) and 1991's *Inner Child* (Motown)—Shanice is best known as a supporting vocalist or duet partner for male artists ranging from Kenny Loggins to Jon Secada to Usher. On her new, self-titled effort, Shanice seems a bit reluctant to assume the role of an independent woman. The album's first and feistiest song, "You Need a Man," which Shanice cowrote with Montell Jordan and Jazz the Man, finds the singer reproaching a girlfriend who has eyes for her lover. On many of the songs that follow, Shanice clings to either specific relationships or the general promise of love—her lithe, sweet soprano fraught with quivering, pining intensity.

That's not to say that Shanice is anybody's doormat. The plaintive ballad "Yesterday" recounts her decision to leave a boyfriend, and on the breezy hip hop-soul confection "You Can Bounce," she dresses down another guy who has done her wrong. But too few of these smartly produced, impressively sung tunes reveal Shanice's thoughts or feelings beyond the context of a love connection. Today's diva is a woman who knows and is comfortable with herself; surely the gifted, emotive Shanice deserves to embrace that modernism.

Elysa Gardner



KEITH MURRAY 'IT'S A BEAUTIFUL THING' JIVE

Keith Murray—more ghetto-charming than ghetto-fabulous, with his penchant for reciting abstruse vocabulary over funkified tracks—has always recalled Damon Wayans's hilariously nonsensical, rhetoric-spewing inmate character from Fox's legendary *In Living Color*. Faced with his own impending incarceration while

recording *It's a Beautiful Thing*, his third solo disc, the Def Squad's most garrulous MC focused much of his talent on his serious realities (Murray began serving a five-year sentence for assault at the end of October). The resulting combo of party anthems and solemn introspection makes this disc—stronger than his 1995 debut, but not as good as '97's *Enigma*—like listening to an episode of *Good Times*.

And ain't we lucky we got him? From the ruffneck opener, "When I Rap," to the ign'ant appeal of "Slap Somebody," Murray's dense, Erick Sermon-fueled music maintains and



entertains as much as the subtly clever, amusing skits that give *LABT* its levity. However, selections such as "Bad Day"—a sour-and-dour satirical take on Ice Cube's 1992 "It Was a Good Day" (Priority)—and "My Life" acknowledge the fucked up side of things while also striving for spiritual uplift.

Many MCs who attempt similar efforts at seriousness succumb to the pitfall of pretension. Not Keith. Throughout the cautionary tales and the unspoken remorse, *It's a Beautiful Thing* retains the much-loved sense of "Cristal-poppin'" playfulness that has always let Mr. Murray get in and get over.

Brent Rollins

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SILK 'TONIGHT' ELEKTRA

If you're wondering what sort of nocturnal activities are the focus of Silk's third album, *Tonight*, these titles—"Love You Down," "Turn You Out," and "Sexcellent"—might provide a clue. Songs like "Satisfied," a piano-driven interlude, portray the guys as ardent, resourceful Romeos. Essentially, this 17-track opus is a testament that the group have grown from boyz to men.

But it's not just their powers of seduction that have matured. Working with writer/producer Darryl "Delite" Allamby (Gerald Levert, LSG), these five fellows have come up with tunes that emphasize their lush harmonies as well as their increasingly impressive rhythmic chops. The deftly syncopated title cut and the first single, "If You," are percolating funk-pop nuggets, while "Superstar" and the thumping "Back in My Arms" offer slower but equally sophisticated grooves.

Time has also ripened Silk's team spirit. Where the group's self-titled 1995 sophomore effort was dominated by tenor Gary "Lil' G" Jenkins's fluid but sometimes self-indulgent riffing, *Tonight* is most notable for its virtuosic ensemble singing. On the grandly romantic "Meeting in My Bedroom," the vocals converge and surge to an ecstatic peak that rivals any climax alluded to on the album. Well, almost.

Elysa Gardner



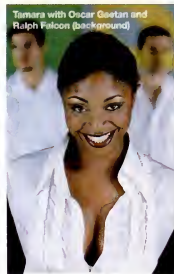
John John, Big G, Jimmy, Timzo, and Lil' G

RENEE KATZ

FUNKY GREEN DOGS 'STAR' TWISTED AMERICA

When Funky Green Dogs sprang from the Miami underground in 1996, they were propelled by feisty lead singer Pamela Williams, whose raw, often intimidating snarl was more clearly descendent of James Brown and Millie Jackson than any typical disco mentor. In combining Williams's voice with melodic tribal-house anthems like "Fired Up!" from *Get Fired Up* (Twisted America, 1996), FGD masterminds Ralph Falcon and Oscar Gaetan deftly laid the foundation for this act to transcend its club roots and carve a solid pop niche.

Now comes *Star*, the mildly appealing, if self-conscious, follow-up—but it's missing the group's greatest asset. In Williams's place is newcomer



Tamara with Oscar Gaetan and Ralph Falcon (background)

Tamara, whose sweet but underdeveloped voice elicits negative comparisons. Tamara's in over her head as she tries to deliver the diva bravado that clubland demands and the soulful finesse required to make the radio grade. However, the girl does deserve props for trying, and she even succeeds on the playfully retro "Body," purring like a baby Donna Summer.

In fairness, Tamara gets no help from the stiff musical material. Falcon and Gaetan never seem to take their eyes off the pop prize—and that's clearly made them too tense to truly let the funk flow. Pity.

L.F.



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TEAR DA CLUB UP THUGS 'CRAZYNDALAZDAYZ'

RELATIVITY



Three members of Memphis's Three 6 Mafia, capitalizing on Mafia's 1997 hit single, "Tear Da Club Up," have taken the title as their name and created a lowbrow album, *Crazyndalazdayz*. Their raw swipes at the fairer sex ("...a face like a goat / but she deep in the throat") are as kind as their promise to "Elbow a Nigga." But despite their put-downs ("Slob on My Knob," "Juicy" says a woman "smelled like mush / ...told her to stop and take a douche"), the Thugs are equal obscenity opportunists, ushering in the always sassy female MC Gangsta Boo to demand, "Suck my pussy, nigga!" They decline with "Hell naw, fuck you!"

Boo peeps in again on the overheated "All Dirty Ho's," on which the Tear Da Clubbers speculate, "I heard she puts barbecue sauce all over your balls." Other guests on the record include Crucial Conflict, Hot Boys, and Spice One. As far as southern flavor goes, these Thugs are a confederacy of distaste. But Too Short, rhyming, "Face on the mattress / Call me daddy while I hit it from the back / Bitch" on "Undercover Freaks," reminds us who the true king is when it comes to settin' back gender politics.

Peter Relic

BLONDIE 'NO EXIT' BEYONDRIMS

During the late '70s and early '80s, Blondie was the ultimate in New York City cool—always one step ahead of the trends. Fronted by bleach-blonde siren Debbie Harry, the genre-twisting rock band scored No. 1 pop hits that delivered disco (1978's "Heart of Glass"), reggae (1980's "The Tide Is High"), and rap (1981's "Rapture") to the mainstream. Now, 16 years after their last album, *The Hunter* (Chrysalis, 1982), Blondie have reunited and recorded a dynamite comeback record.

No Exit is a nostalgic, but at the same time progressive, collage of punk, reggae, hip hop, acid jazz, and country (yes, country). The first single, "Maria," is reminiscent of Blondie's 1978 hit "Sunday Girl," as Harry sings whimsical poetry over spiky guitars and jingling keyboards: "She's like a millionaire / Walking on Imported air." And "Boom Boom in the Zoom Zoom Room" is not a Wreckx-N-Effect cover, but a languid, loungey number featuring Harry's gentle cooing and soft, lilting trumpets. Then, over the Transylvanian heavy metal of the title track, Harry picks up the mike and battles special guest star Coolio. Her crazy-clever psychobabble mesmerizes. His overwrought nonsense embarrasses...white-girl rap wins.

No Exit proves Blondie are still mad, magical alchemists who can turn any musical style into gold. Their sonic consciousness are almost spiritual. A real satisfying mind fuck. Pass that cigarette.

Mykella Van Cooten



Back in blonde

REVOLUTIONS
BY CHRISTINA VERIAN

EL RITMO

Tropical music en español is currently topping American charts like never before. While salsa has young, U.S.-raised Nuyorican performers such as Marc Anthony and La India to thank for the genre's resurgence popularity among second-generation Latinos and gringos alike, merengue—the traditional music of Hispaniola, the island shared by the Dominican Republic and Haiti—is blowing up among American fans of tropical music, thanks in part to Oro Solido.

Raul Acosta, 27, the group's founder and lead vocalist, grew up in Union City, N.J., the son of a Dominican merengue. "I grew up listening to a lot of rap and a lot of rock," says Acosta from his home in New Jersey, "but Spanish music was much more accessible to me."

During the 1980s, most American Latinos weren't feeling the tropical sounds of their heritage, gravitating toward hip hop and R&B instead, but says Acosta, "Among my family and friends, merengue was always hip."

Back in 1994, Acosta got 16 young musicians together to form Oro Solido [Solid Gold], and miraculously, the first single off their self-titled debut, "Tá Cachet" (Platano), was a hit. **We were one of the first merengue bands from outside of the Dominican Republic to make it big," he happily points out.**

But Oro Solido's early success didn't come without criticism. Merengue's more traditional old guard just couldn't take them seriously. "They did look at us as rebels, being so young and from the States," Acosta says. "The Dominican press would come down really hard on us and the way we do things." And Oro Solido certainly do things their own way. They love singing naughty hooks that are a life with double entendres. In "La Viagra," from their current album, *El Presidente del Merengue* (Platano), the chorus

Raul Acosta



chimes, "que sube la Viagra la cabeza" (Viagra makes the head go up). "When we perform live, we get a lot of crowd participation," Acosta affirms, describing the following scenario that got the group banned from performing at New York's Copacabana: "During our 'La Tanguita Roja' (The Red G-String), all these girls from the crowd came up to the stage and started showing off the red G-strings they had on under their dresses," he says, laughing. "The management got very upset." And as for the meaning behind "La Paleta" (The Lollipop), well...

While these young Dominican-Americans are succeeding with their music's reverse migration back to the islands, living in the U.S. keeps them current with popular American music. In homage to that duality, Raul Acosta plans to work with another Latino brother who's making moves in music. "Far Joe and I are now talking about doing something together," he says excitedly, "blending hip hop with some merengue. We like that mix 'cause we are that mix." And the rest of us will be waiting on the dance floor.

FIVE PICKS MORE LATIN FLAVOR TO CHECK FOR

- OLGA TAÑÓN—*Te Acordarás de Mí* (NEA/Wes Latina, 1998)
- VIENTO DE AGUA—*De Puerto Rico al Mundo* (Agogo/Obadiac, 1998)
- BLOQUE—*Bloque* (Luaka Bop/Warner Bros., 1998)
- TITO PUENTE—*Live at Birdland: Dancemania '99* (RMM/Universal 1998)
- MICHAEL STUART—*Retratos* (RMM/Universal, 1998)

SLY AND ROBBIE WITH HOWIE B. 'DRUM AND BASS STRIP TO THE BONE BY HOWIE B.' FILM PICTURES

It makes sense that Kingston's celebrated Riddim Twins—drummer Lowell "Sly" Dunbar and bassist Robert Shakespeare—have finally stepped into the drum 'n' bass arena. After all, the accelerated techno offshoot has its roots firmly planted in the same hypnotic reggae beats these guys have been turning out for the past 25 years. For this satisfying album, the duo enlist British DJ and producer Howie B., who has previously provided beat therapy for the likes of U2 and Everything But the Girl, to modernize their sound.

Sly and Robbie



It's not always a smooth operation, but *Drum and Bass* certainly has its tasty moments. Splinters of electronic noise and synthesizer effects run through the disc, as Howie B. lends the music a movie-soundtrack air, particularly on the nine-minute track, "Into Battle," and the sensual "Drilling for Oil" (strangely, the album is being marketed with a companion DVD featuring Japanimation). The attention-grabbing songs, however, are the ones that take the biggest risks.

Anchored by Sly and Robbie's deep grooves and offset by measures of white noise, "Superthruster" generates incredible power, while the well-arranged breaks and samples on "Major Magic" wholly justify any future stylistic crossbreeding.

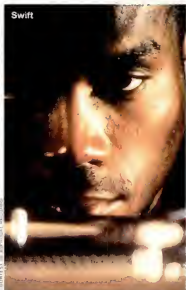
A.V.

ROB SWIFT 'THE ABLIST' ASPHODEL

Rob Swift, one quarter of master turntablism crew the X-ecutioners, is undoubtedly one of the illest DJs to ever touch the Tech 1200s. Fresh off the X-ecutioners' '97 debut, *X-pressions* (Asphodel), the Swift One tries his hand at turntablism and production on his brilliant debut, *The Ablast*.

Swift flexes his creativity in as many ways as he can possibly imagine. On the highly innovative "What Would You Do," he effortlessly strings together a series of hip hop quotes to convey—in no uncertain terms—how incredibly dope he is. And then there's the mind-boggling "Fusion Beats," which features live keyboards under Swift's beat-juggling of Boogie Down Productions' 1987 classic "The Bridge Is Over" (live). The only time the

Swift



album lags is when Swift steps to the mike on "I'm Leaving." His melodic beats are pleasing as usual, but unfortunately his stale rhyme style can't keep up with them.

Overall, *The Ablast* is not only a testament to Rob Swift's greatness, but also to the fact that turntablism is a fairly new, thrilling genre whose creative limits are just starting to be explored.

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UNDERWORLD 'BEAUCOUP FISH' 12

While Underworld never quite rivaled the chart success of the Prodigy or Chemical Brothers, they *did* help deliver techno to the masses with their 1996 hit "Born Slippy," from the soundtrack for the movie *Trainspotting* (Miramax, 1996). But many feared that the British club trio, having spent the last three years failing to capitalize on that song's breakthrough, had missed their golden moment.

On their latest album, the peculiarly titled *Beaucoup Fish*, singer/guitarist Karl Hyde, programmer Rick Smith, and DJ Darren Emerson prove they are still very much in the game. With layered vocals and teeth-rattling beats again providing the backdrop for their spiraling tunes, Underworld branch out in the most unexpected ways over the course of the 11-track disc. In a brilliant blur of rhythm and noise, the band members explore old-school electro ("Bruce Lee"), gritty disco ("Shudder/King of Snake"), and distortion-fueled punk-funk ("Push Upstairs"). It's to their credit that they don't once lose their distinctively elegant personality in the mix. In the typically anonymous world of techno, there is no cooler feat.

Aidin Vaziri

YUKMOUTH 'THUGGED OUT' RAP-A-LOT

Puttin' it down for their hometown Oakland as the Luniz, Yukmouth and his former partner in rhyme, Numskull, scored national acclaim with an assist from a hot Club Nouveau bop on 1995's "I Got Five on It" (Noo Trybe/Virgin). Now, after a coolly received 1997 sophomore album, *Lunatik Muzik*, Yuk steps out on his own with *Thugged Out: The Albatross*.

Like just about every other hip-hop release these days, *Thugged Out* is a double CD that boasts flashes of brilliance. On "City of Dope," Yuk drops the best ode to Oakland since Too Short's 1988 "Life Is...Too Short" (Jive). Then he flips contradictory themes on "Stallion" and the poignant "Father Like Son."



On the former, Yuk teams up with MC Ren and Tech N9NE to trade sex tales, then on "Father" he reflects on his experience as a parent. But these few high-quality songs aren't enough to compensate for the mediocre tracks that fill this overly ambitious album.

Thugged Out is your standard late-'90s double-CD release: a bunch of filler material wrapped around a few stand-out cuts. Unfortunately, Yuk doesn't have any other bells and whistles to get him over, so maybe *Thugged Out* is a concept best left to the likes of Nore.

M.A.L.

REVOLUTIONS
BEATIFICATIONS
BY CHAIRMAN MAO

CHAIRMAN'S CHOICE

"Do You Wanna Be an MC?" (K-Otit Entertainment, 713-217-6497) is the query posed by K-Otit, three amigos from Houston, who urge you to use caution when answering. Over a sinister piano track abetted by razor-sharp cuts from Philly's world-famous DJ Cash Money, vocalists Damien Randle and Micah Nickerson present the rap game's hazards with the sagacious of H-Town Yodas: "Believe me, the rhythm part's easy / But in this game it gets greasy... MCs be seen' their CDs as Frisbees," laments Micah. The trio get even harsher on the B-side, "7 MCs Pt. II," a devastating, state-no-names continuation of the dis-fest they started on last year's *Spontaneity*. But you don't exactly need a road map to figure out who's the target of lines such as, "It's all about the Benjamins, but / I'm callin' out your feminine strut."

Diggin' in the Crates producer Buckwild, after years of constructing gems like Diamond D's "You Can't Front" (Mercury, 1995), O.C.'s "Time's Up" (Wild Pitch, 1994), and Biggie's "I Got a Story to Tell" (Bad Boy, 1997), uses his latest cast of creations toward his own EP, *Compositions* (Diggin' / Fat Beats, 212-965-1862). While contributions from the Reservoir Dogs and Firehead are as solid as Ashford & Simpson's wedding vows, the Bronx boardman's reteaming with O.C. on "Burn Me Slow," is the obvious standout—a playfully laid-back, extended metaphor of aural herbals. Explains O., "Buckwild beatin' your eardrums with Thai sticks / Like tappin' tabags of weed / He droppin' snarls and kicks." Added bonus: Buck's unreleased remix version of Big Punisher's "Dream Shatterer" over the same Love Unlimited loop that fortifies Black Rob's "I Dare You."

Queensbridge projects' ACD made a brief underground splash a few years back with their appearance on Mobb Deep's "Street Life" from the Red Hot Organization's AIDS benefit record, *America Is Dying Slowly* (EastWest/Elektra, 1996). To some, the duo's latest, "Kings of New York" (HitList, 718-335-HITS), might sound like just another promotion of antiochian behavior. But fans of the hard-line QB aesthetic will undoubtedly warm to producer Rick Rude's edgy keyboard runs and a potent guest shot from fellatio-receiving, adversary shooting, Firm biz-ness-man Nature (here self-dubbed the "Black Shakespeare.") What up, Bill!

DJ Saeed and Kendo of Bedroom Produktionsz



of espousing a positive cause without sounding completely corny.

It's that supreme everlasting foundation," goes the chorus on the group's excellent "S.E.L.F." (Du4Self Recordings, 253-953-9515). "Knowledge is the key to free the Black nation." But sonic impact is the true trump card here: impressively dissected guitar fragments, precise cutting, and most intriguing, vocals whose courtified inflections suggest the Huskie state's answer to Atlanta's Goodie M.O.B. Now ask yourself: Whatchu really know about the Great Northwest?

FIVE PICKS MORE FLAVOR TO CHECK FOR

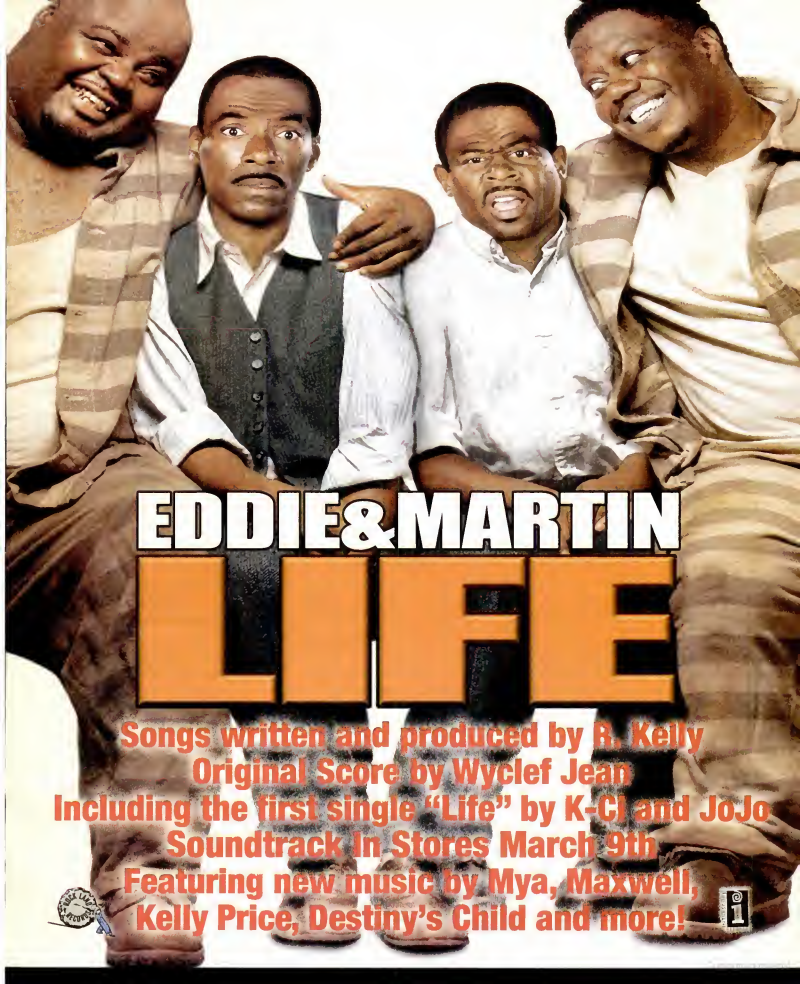
—"Verbalize (DJ Spinn Remix)" (Blindside/Fat Beats, 212-965-1862)

—"Maintain the Focus" (Audio Research/Fat Beats, 212-965-1862)

—"The Man" (ABB, 510-419-0396)

—"Major League (Remix)" (Stones Throw, 415-441-5051)

—"Styles, Crews, Flows, Beats" (Stones Throw)



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VARIOUS ARTISTS 'RIVER OF SONG: A MUSICAL JOURNEY DOWN THE MISSISSIPPI'

SMITHSONIAN FOLKWAYS

Whenever the practically brain-dead rock genre goes into cardiac arrest, the media-mad labels work overtime trying to reinvent the wheel. Over the past eight years, they've foisted grunge, alternative, Britrock, grll rock, and electronica on popular culture. Now it's swing and Americana, both revisionist "movements." And while the musicians appear to be serious, the rock machine has predictably packaged their music as a "new," "important," and yes, "white" thang.

River of Song: A Musical Journey Down the Mississippi, a two-CD set put together by the Smithsonian Institute's ethnomusicology crew, convincingly debunks this latest pop scam. This dazzling overview of the diverse music developed by known and unknown talents living along the Mississippi reveals in 36 tracks the multicultural depth of true Americana.

Rather than opting for genre-specific blocks of catalog recordings, *River* mixes and matches music performed in four geographical categories: "The Headwaters" (Minnesota to Iowa), "The Midwestern Crossroads" (Illinois to Missouri), "The Southern Fusion" (Kentucky to Mississippi) and "Louisiana." The cleverly juxtaposed series of disparate tunes, such as Chippewa Nation's tribal "Powwow Song" and Babes in Toyland's grll metal "22," reveals that all American musical forms have roots in the same gene pool. You can't fool all of the people all of the time. **T.T.**



Gene DeLaFosse plays in *River of Song*

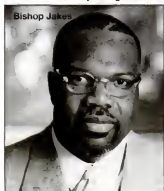
BISHOP T.D. JAKES SR. 'SACRED LOVE SONGS'

ISLAND

Now that Kirk Franklin has forever blurred the line between church and the street, Bishop T.D. Jakes Sr. (best known for his inspirational book

The Lady, Her Lover and Her Lord, G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1998) has blessed us with his next leap of faith. The gorgeous *Sacred Love Songs*, conceived with sanctified single and married folks in mind, has got to be the first champagne-and-candlelight gospel album.

Like Franklin, Jakes has created genre-transcending gospel by hooking up catchy God-speak with ungodly pop grooves (in this case, quiet storm rub-a-dub). The album flows rapturously from the Babyface-esque melodic grandeur of "Usher Me" to "Now I Can Dance for You," with its subtle, Mary J. Blige-flavored rhythm swing. *Sacred* may feel like



Bishop Jakes

R&B, but one close listen to the Bishop's Barry White-channeling baritone will set you straight. Over bluesy strings and African percussion, Jakes soothingly rescues the priestly advice of *The Lady, Her Lover and Her Lord* ("Love your wives as Christ hath loved the church"). A gossamer conundrum of spirituality and sensuality, *Sacred Love Songs* is all about reaching the next level and experiencing a higher love. **T.T.**

A vision in white



THE GALLERIES

MEN OF VIZION 'MOV'

KLAWWORK

Much like a Calgon bubble bath, Men of Vizion's 1996 Teddy Riley-produced hit, "House Keeper," took girls away to a dreamland where boys started out and then stayed sweet. But judging from their second album, *MOV*, those days are long gone. The Brooklyn quintet, with original members Spanky and G-Fly, plus new additions Chill, Stylz, and Nitty Green (formerly the doo-wop trio RUFF), are all grown-up now—and apparently as horny as the President at a debutante ball (groan).

Despite corny sex talk like, "Check...my freaky stylz / ...I get you moving up and down / It's all night, girl, if you scream real loud," the album's first single, "Do You Feel Me?..(Freak You)," is enjoyably danceable. It gets a lift from Lost Boy Mr. Cheeks's cutesy rap vocals and producer Fred Jerkins III's hoopy, Timbaland-inspired bounce. "Break Me Off," written and produced by Joe, plays like a saucy version of "Don't Wanna Be a Player" sped up to double time, with understated piano notes and tinkly chimes.

Beats-wise, *MOV* is a pleasure, and these guys can sing, but they waste too much time trying to prove themselves loveless. Men of Vizion's newfound penchant for what Common would call a "booby-this-and-freak-me-baby" style is as tired as jokes about the Clinton sex scandal. **M.V.C.**

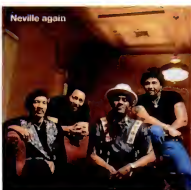
THE NEVILLE BROTHERS 'VALENCE STREET'

COLUMBIA

The Neville Brothers (Art, Cyril, Aaron, and Charles) are one of the greatest American bands. The sibling quartet's body of work, more than two decades deep, has influenced rockers from Bob Marley to Robert Palmer to Lenny Kravitz. *Valence Street*, the Nevilles' first studio release since 1996's *Mitakuye Oyasin Oyasin*, is their booty-dipping, Caribbean-swinging, "bama-moaning, boogie-rocking fulfillment of ancient prophecy.

Valence (if you skip the cheesy "Until We Meet Again") is an exhilarating collection of diaspora blues. From the delicate, handkerchief-waving bounce of "Real Funk," to the Bobby Womack-influenced, warm-daddy hug of "Utterly Beloved" ("Love is a blessing you can't disguise / Like the glow of gladness in a baby's eyes / It's utterly beloved"), the brothers are inspiring. The Wyclef Jean collaboration, "Mons Lisa," adds an unexpected hip hop edge to the soulful mix. Throw in three celestial tenor leads from Aaron ("If I Had a Hammer," "A Little Piece of Heaven," "Give Me a Reason"), and it's a beautifully done deal.

Given the Nevilles' godfather-like status, it's a pity that many folks aren't familiar with their music. May you never front on the Neville Brothers again. **Tom Terrell**



Neville again

REVOLUTIONS

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MONOPOLY

1. Sure Sony PlayStations are fun, but do kids ever play board games like **Monopoly** anymore?

2. Doesn't that superdope cover artwork for *RZA as Bobby Digital* (1998) make you wish that records came in a 64-inch format? 3. And isn't the "Domestic Violence" song on *Bobby Digital* the most harrowing depiction of such since Laurence Fishburne and Angela Bassett ripped 1993's *What's Love Got to Do With It*? 4. How strange is it that Jay-Z's *Vol. 2...Hard Knock Life* won R&B Albums Artist of the Year at the 1998 *Billboard* Awards? 5. Speaking of the *Billboard* Awards, didn't Shania Twain (Female Artist of the Year) look like a *Star Trek* character in that gold velvet get-up? 6. And after that supercharged Hole

performance at the Awards, does anyone doubt that Courtney Love can still rock,

Hard Knock Life) and "Lobster & Scrimp" (from Timbaland's 1998 *Tim's Bio: From the Motion Picture: Life From Da Basement*) for months, aren't you dying to hear some more Jay/Tim collaborations? 8. Who in their right mind thinks that it's a good idea for Donald Trump to play himself in a weekly soap opera being developed for Showtime called *Trump Tower*? 9. Don't

you wish you could hear the late Flip Wilson say, "The devil made me buy this dress" just one more time? 10. And while we're on the tube, was Desert Fox the first military operation to be named after a TV network? 11. If Deepak Chopra married Oprah Winfrey, would she be called Oprah Chopra? 12. Couldn't you go for some Cracker Jacks right about now? 13. After 1996's *Jerry Maguire* and 1998's *Enemy of the State*, aren't you feeling like Regina King plays the *hell* outta those wifey roles? 14. Why is Reverend Run (or should we call him Rev. Run Thugs-N-Harmony) starting to make bounce records?

15. And will someone please tell the good Reverend to stop? 16. She is magnificently endowed, buy why does it seem like Mia X shows cleavage in *all* of her photographs, (including the ones that have appeared on these pages)? 17. Isn't the album cover for DMX's latest, *Flesh of My Flesh, Blood of My Blood* (Def Jam), completely disgusting? 18. Why did Daz and Kurupt have to go and title their upcoming Dogg

Pound reunion album *Dogg Shit*? 19. At what point did VH1 become so much cooler than MTV? 20. And truly, isn't

Britney Spears really just the white-girl version of Aaliyah, with a little T-Boz thrown in for extra flavor?



Regina King

DAVID J. PHILLIPS



Mia X

MONOPOLY

20 QUESTIONS

even when completely sober? 7. After pumping "Nigga What, Nigga Who (Originator 99)" (from Jay's aforementioned



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THE DETAILS

VIBES: "Concrete Jungle"

page 84: Green cotton long-sleeve button-down shirt \$85 by Nautica by David Chu available at Lord & Taylor, Marshall Field's, and select Macy's nationwide; white T-shirt by Hanes; olive linen short-sleeve shirt \$58 by cK Calvin Klein Jeans available at select Bloomingdale's and Macy's nationwide; hat by Polo Jeans Co. RALPH LAUREN.

page 85: Beige turtleneck jacket \$149 by The North Face (for more information, please call 800-719-NORTH); khaki cotton cargo pant \$48 by cK Calvin Klein Jeans available at Lord & Taylor and Dillard's stores nationwide; sneakers by NISS; watch by Swiss Army; skateboard by Brooklyn Boards.

page 86: Green and beige plaid cotton long-sleeve shirt \$50 and bucket hat, both by PNB Nation (for more information, please call 212-440-2223); beige cotton cargo pant \$72 by FUBU available at Macy's nationwide and Dr.Jay's, N.Y.C.; white cotton T-shirt \$11 by Polo Ralph Lauren Underwear available at Macy's East, Macy's West, and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide; hat by Columbia Sportswear.

page 88: Khaki cotton button-down long-sleeve shirt \$68, by Tommy Hilfberg available at Dillard's and select Macy's nationwide; beige cotton T-shirt (as head wrap) \$20 by Spiewalk (for more information, please call 800-223-6850); beige barbour linen and rayon parka \$185 by Nautica by David Chu available at Lord & Taylor, Marshall Field's, and select Macy's stores nationwide; beige microfiber utility pant \$88 by DKNY Jeans available at select Macy's and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide; boots by Nike ACG; beige cotton long-sleeve shirt \$61 by FUBU available at Macy's nationwide and Dr. Jay's, N.Y.C.; beige linen cargo pant \$88 by A/X Armani Exchange available at A/X Armani Exchange stores nationwide; boots by Timberland; hat by Polo Jeans Co. RALPH LAUREN.

page 90: Olive polyester long-sleeve button-down shirt \$45 and hat, both by Columbia Sportswear (for more information, please call 800-MA-BOYLE).

page 91: Beige nylon vest \$88 and khaki cotton convertible pant \$68, both by Timberland (for more information, please call 800-445-5545); beige cotton sweater with green logo \$40 by Perry Ellis America (for more information, please call 800-577-0077); sneakers by NISS; watch by Swiss Army; skateboard by Brooklyn Boards.

VIBE Fashion: "Dangerous Liaisons"

page 98: Navy silk chiffon panel top \$297, navy cotton bandeaus top \$218, navy cotton pant with panel \$320, and shoes, all by CoSTUME NATIONAL available at CoSTUME NATIONAL, N.Y.C., Blake, Chicago, and Barneys New York, N.Y.C., Beverly Hills, and Chicago; clutch purse by Louis Vuitton; sunglasses by Fendi.

page 99: Black cotton and linen three-button unstructured jacket \$930 and gray cotton button-down shirt \$210, both by Gucci available at select Saks Fifth Avenue stores nationwide; light gray nylon and elastin stretch vinyl top \$574 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana Boutique, N.Y.C. and Bal Harbour; earrings by H.Stern.

page 100: Black acetate and nylon cut-out tank dress \$415 by Stephen Sprouse available at Bloomingdale's, N.Y.C., Barneys New York, N.Y.C., and Patricia Fields, N.Y.C.; shoes by Manolo Blahnik.

page 101: Navy wool beaded-stripe three-piece suit \$1,595 by Ralph Lauren Purple Label available at Barneys New York, N.Y.C., San Francisco, and Houston; black and white cotton striped dress shirt \$95 and black and white silk herringbone tie, both by Ralph Lauren Purple Label available at select Polo Ralph Lauren stores nationwide; watch by L.W.C.; vintage cuff links; vintage telescope.

page 102: Black terry cloth cotton man-suit bath towel with blue trim by FUBU (for more information please call 888-GET-FUBU); boots by Timberland; watch by Rolex.

page 103: Lavender silk evening dress with floral bouquet \$2,547 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana Boutique, N.Y.C.; shoes by Manolo Blahnik; black cotton V-neck T-shirt with rhinestone trim \$275 and black cotton flat-front pant \$350, both by Gianni Versace Men's available at Versace Boutique nationwide; boots by Kenneth Cole; watch by Rolex.

page 104: Brown cotton pinstripe suit \$665 and white cotton dress shirt \$98, both by Emporio Armani available at Emporio Armani stores nationwide; black silk tank top \$264 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Dolce & Gabbana N.Y.C. and Bal Harbour; black cotton and elastin cargo pant \$343 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Bagutta, N.Y.C. and select Neiman Marcus stores nationwide; watch by Rolex.

page 105: Silver metal mesh dress with aqua mohair overlay by Gianni Versace

(continued on page 178)

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THE VIBe SPOT

Springing forward into fabulous fashion, VIBE announced its annual spring fashion issue with a special dinner with Mariah Carey, who was in New York City celebrating the release of her greatest hits CD, *The Ones*. From street-inspired sportswear designers to high-end clothiers, VIBE's fashion and music peers came out for the festivities. Check out the photos from the party and other recent VIBE events:



1. The guest of honor, Mariah Carey, arrived showing off her sleek, chic style.

2. Among the many well-wishers were (from left): David Gruning, Calvin Klein; Mark Eckstrom, group sales director, VIBE; Andy Hilliger and wife; and Len Burnett, associate publisher, VIBE.

3. Keith Perrin of FUBU and Tony Thorne of 3rd

Mecca USA discussed how everyone looks good in black with Abigail Marcus, beauty and fragrance manager, VIBE.

4. Chaka Wilson of Nycy and Beth Gillies, sportswear manager, VIBE, struck a pose.

5. Emil Wilbekin, fashion director, VIBE, chatted it up with Michelle Stein, AEF; Fraizer Conlon, Donna Karan; and Linda Switzer, Versace Profumi.

6. Ever on the pulse of fashion and music, Absolut provided the spirits for the evening. Shown here with Robin Gibson (center), corporate accounts director, are William E. Smith (left) and Mario Austin of Seagram's Americas.

7. Russell Simmons, his beautiful wife, Kimora, and Andre Harrell stopped by to wish Mariah and VIBE the best.

8. VIBE fell into Fall Thursdays at the Emporio Armani store in New York City by hosting a

series of cocktail in-stores featuring music by the hottest DJs in the nation.

9. Fifteen years and spinning. The legendary Kool DJ Red Alert, of Hot 97 FM in New York City, pumped up the volume at the Armani in-store.

10. What would a VIBE/Armani fashion event be without the power trinity that is (from left) Kadi Aguiros, style editor, VIBE; Katina Lee, face/fashion coordinator, VIBE; and Emil Wilbekin, fashion director, VIBE.

11. For all we do, this trip's on you. The hard-working VIBE tribe was treated to a day at the horse races in Far Hills, N.J., courtesy of our bosses. Thanks!

Photo credits: Caroline Torem-Craig (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7); Ronnie Wright (8, 9, 10); Thembsa S. Mshaka (11)

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THE DETAILS

(continued from page 178)

Atrium, N.Y.C., select Macy's, and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide; white long-sleeve cotton T-shirt by Hanes; khaki nylon cargo pant with drawstring \$88 and sneakers, both by DKNY Jeans Men's available at Atrium, N.Y.C., select Macy's, and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide.

page 142: White cotton and Lycra short-sleeve zip-neck crew \$44, black Lycra swimsuit \$65, sport sandals, sunglasses, and white nylon swimsuit \$65, all by DKNY Active Women's available at Atrium, N.Y.C., select Macy's, and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide; coral cotton will cropped pant \$68 by DKNY Jeans Women's available at Atrium, N.Y.C., select Macy's, and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide; aqua socks, black Lycra swimsuit \$65, navy cotton zip-away shirt \$78, and sport sandals, all by DKNY Active Women's available at Atrium, N.Y.C., select Macy's, and Bloomingdale's stores nationwide.

Gear: "Velcro"

page 144: From top left: Navy nylon swimming trunks with Velcro crotch \$95 by Dolce & Gabbana available at Neiman Marcus and Dolce & Gabbana Boutiques, N.Y.C. and Bal Harbour; beige cotton crewneck sweater with Velcro shoulder strap \$45 by Anne Cerutti \$88 available at Prophet, Chicago, Tyrone, Roslyn, and Charles Spigal, Pittsburgh; black three-layer Gortex pant \$48 by Timberland (for more information, please call 800-445-5545); blue Clima Fit nylon waterproof/breathable jacket \$200 by Nike (for more information, please call 800-352-NIKE); white cotton Velcro shirt \$36 by Levi's SilverTab Women's (for more information, please call 800-USA-LEVI); yellow nylon rain jacket \$68 by Tommy Hilfinger (for more information, please call 800-888-8802); beige GVV sneaker \$60 by Puma (for more information, please call 800-662-7862); Tahiti slide by Nautica \$30 (for more information, please call 800-443-2807); Abiza slide by Polo Sport \$39 available at Dillard's, Bloomingdale's, and Macy's East nationwide; G-Shock G-Lide watch \$110 by Casio (for more information, please call 800-YO-CASIO); black nylon Velcro waist pouch with leg strap \$155 by Helmut Lang available at Helmut Lang, N.Y.C. and Barney's New York, N.Y.C.

Sneak Peak

Black leather Velcro men's walking shoe MW805 \$75 by New Balance (for more information, please call 800-343-4648).

VIBEFace: "Fresh Princess"

page 146: Navy lightweight stretch gabardine NASA jacket with zip-out hood \$330 by K189 by Daryl K available at Fred Segal, L.A., Traffic, L.A., and Daryl K, N.Y.C.; cream cotton Lycra fleece sleeveless hoodie with detachable hood \$146 by K189 by Daryl K available at Barney's New York, N.Y.C., Big Drop, N.Y.C., and Daryl K, N.Y.C.

Tech: "Daddy's House"

page 156: 100-inch movie screen by Knoll Systems available through Acoustic Innovations (800-983-6233). Cinema Chair II 26-inch movie-theater seats, \$1,397 to \$1,577 also available through Acoustic Innovations (800-983-6233). Gold Medal Antique Deluxe No. 2660GT popcorn machine and No. 2659 cart \$1,264 available through Rail City Popcorn (800-356-0074, or call Gold Medal at 800-543-0862).

page 157: Plasmavision 42 EP by Fujitsu \$40,999 (for more information, please call 888-888-3424 or go to www.plasmavision.com). Creston Smarttouch ST5 control system \$2,500-\$5,900 (for more information, please call 800-237-2041). Radio Flyer No. 18red wagon \$70 available at Galt Toys (847-498-4660, or call Radio Flyer at 773-637-7100). Entertainment system by Pioneer Electronics \$260 to \$2,200 (for more information, please call 800-421-1464).

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Miles Davis. John Coltrane. Thelonious Monk. Art Blakey. Ornette Coleman. Sonny Rollins. Lee Morgan. Jimmy Smith. Wayne Shorter. Herbie Hancock. Over the past 60 years, Blue Note Records, the most recognizable brand in jazz, has chronicled some of the greatest musicians the world has ever known. Founded January 6, 1939 by Alfred Lion, a German immigrant who loved swing jazz, the label went on to develop an unparalleled stable of awe-inspiring innovators and signature stylists.

Beyond its role as the chronicler of musical revolutionaries, however, Blue Note emerged as an aesthetic tastemaker, exemplifying the absolute essence of "cool." The sartorial sensibilities of the musicians had a lot to do with it—their dark, narrow-

labelled suits, button-down collars, and skinny ties were emulated by bohemians and hipsters everywhere. But it was also the album covers, whose daring simplicity represented a revolution in design as distinctive as the bebop, soul-jazz, and new jazz contained inside. For 11 years, beginning in 1956, the covers were created by Reid Miles, a former adman whose work on those 12-inch-square palettes is still startling. (Check the striking cover art—all five versions—of the new Roots album, *Things Fall Apart* (MCA), for proof of Miles's lasting influence.) Featuring the evocative photographs of Francis Wolff as a primary visual element, Miles made cultural icons out of Blue Note's musicians and their curvy, gleaming instruments. He found bold new ways to

arrange images and space, sometimes using only large blocks of color and strings of words printed in different sizes. But most of the album jackets prominently displayed the musicians' faces—black faces—a major statement in that pre-Civil Rights era.

Ultimately, though, the secret to Blue Note's cool can be found in the sounds those musicians created: the penetrating wail of a tenor saxophone, the smooth call of a muted trumpet, the street-chapel groove of a Hammond B3. Pure and drawn straight from the soul, Blue Note music sounds fresh and vibrant—especially in today's chaotic circus of secondhand stimuli and information overload. And what could be cooler than that?

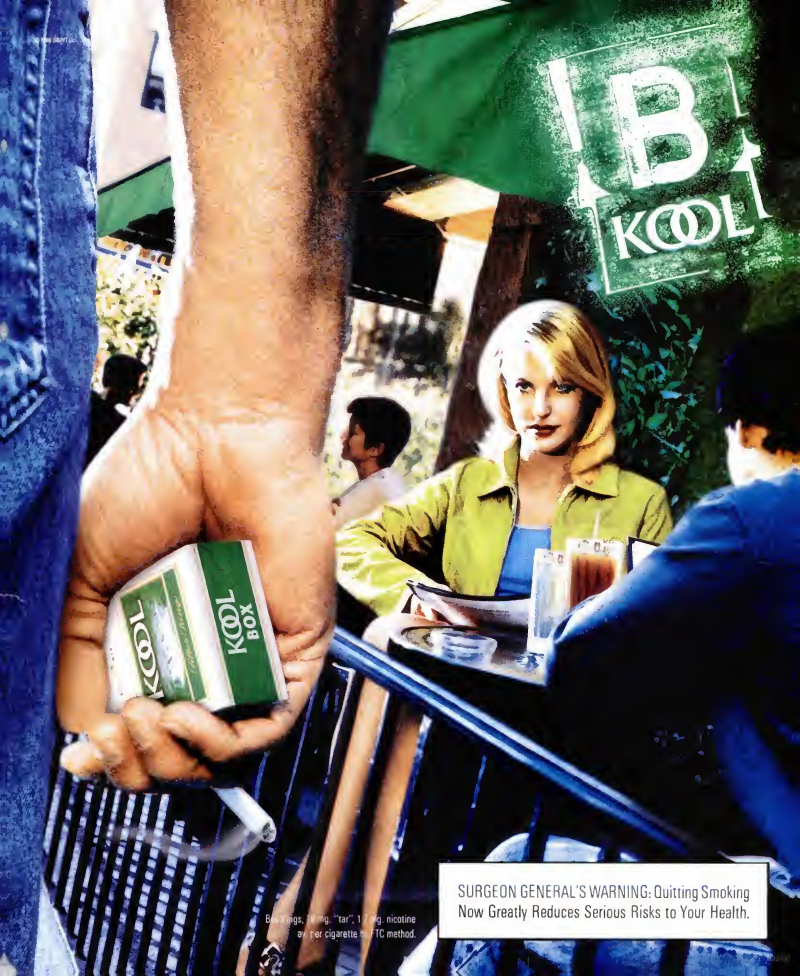
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